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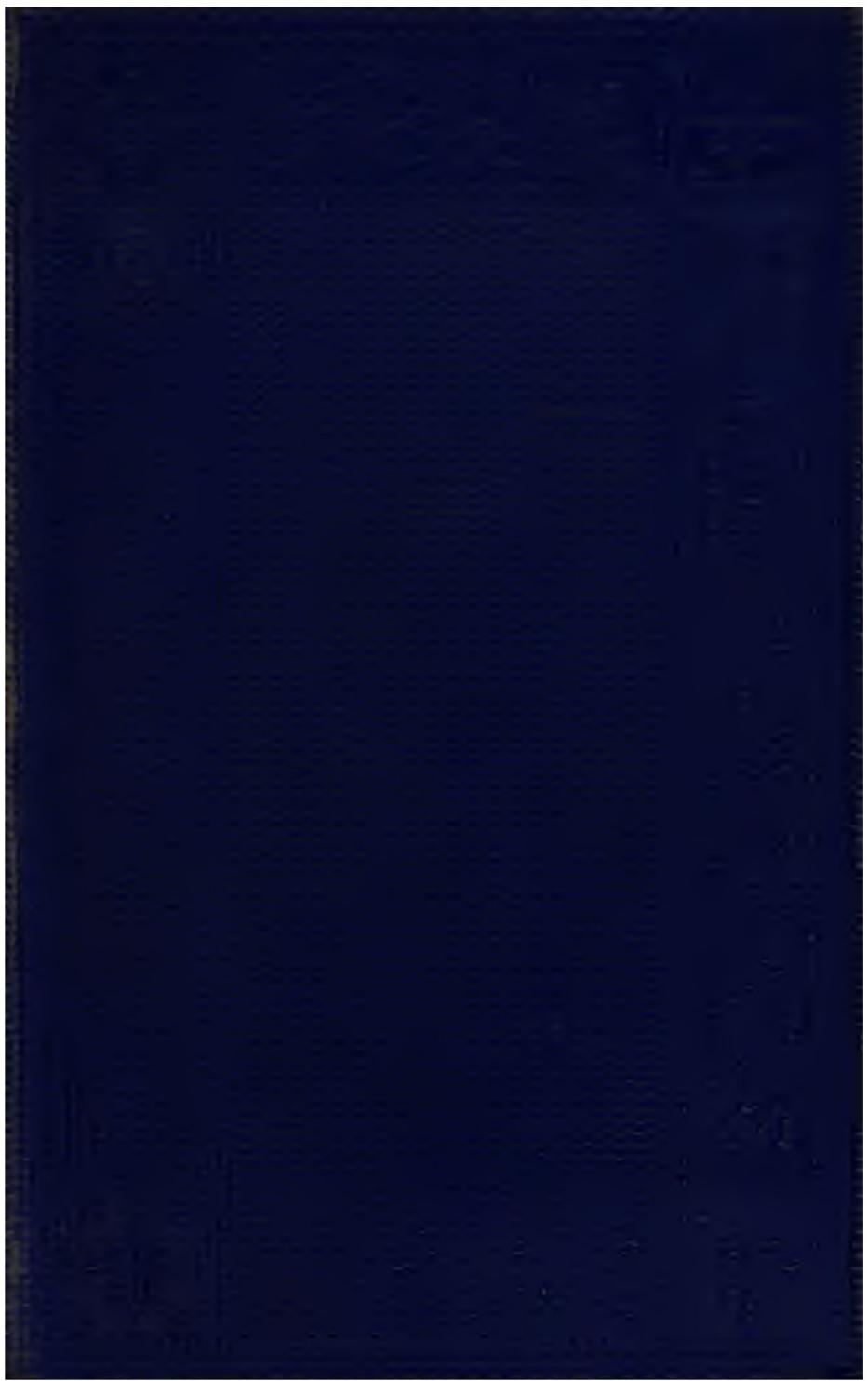
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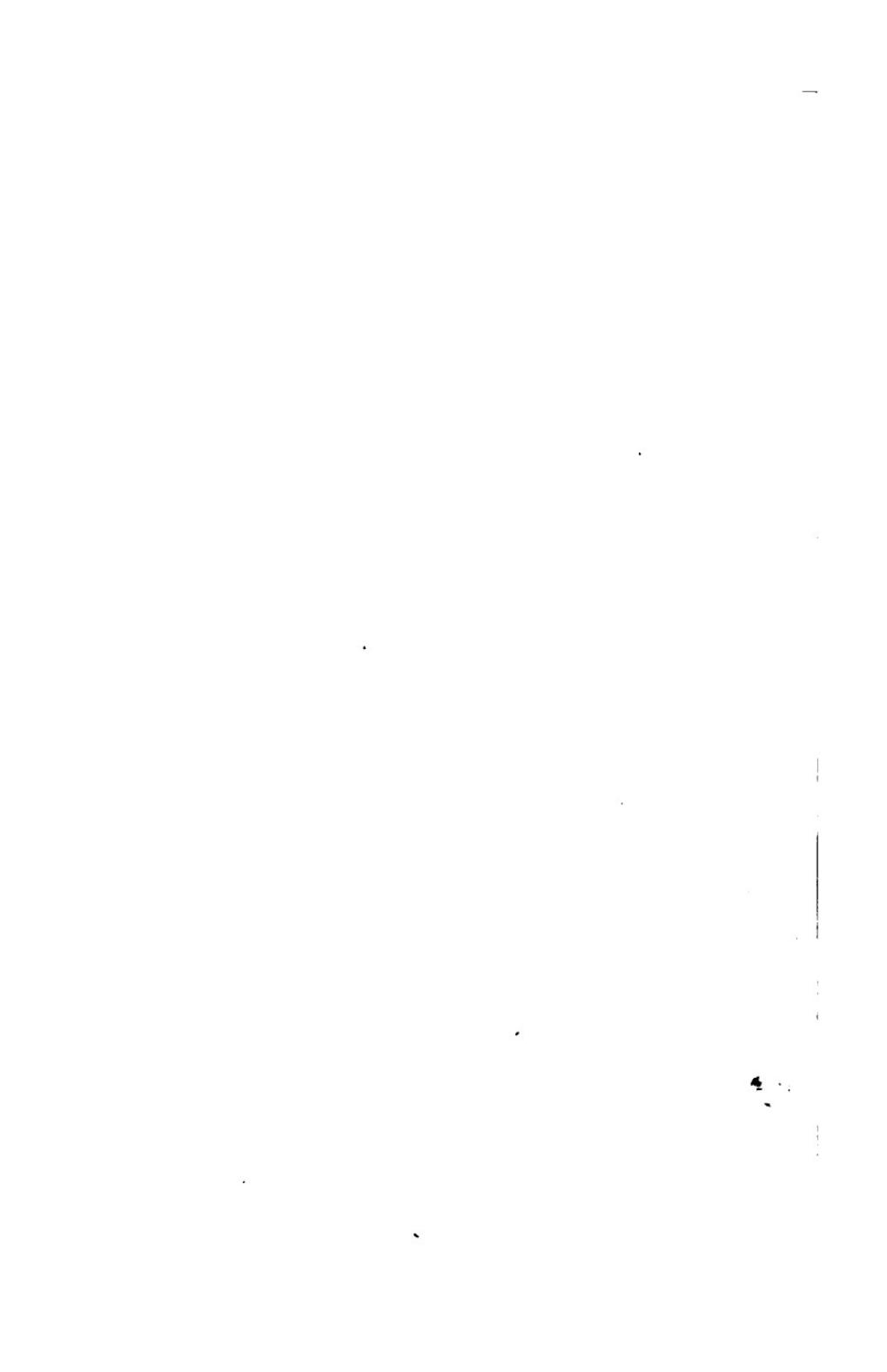
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A

Maiden of our own Day.



BY

FLORENCE WILFORD,

AUTHOR OF "PLAY AND EARNEST," "THE MASTER OF
CHURCHILL ABBOTS," ETC.

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A MAIDEN OF OUR OWN DAY.

CHAPTER I.

“ Quiet talk she liketh best
In a bower of gentle looks,—
Watering flowers, or reading books.

“ And her voice it murmurs lowly,
As a silver stream may run,
Which yet feels, you feel, the sun.”

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

DO you know the cathedral town of ——, there stood two or three years ago, an old-fashioned grey stone house, the front of which looked upon a dullside-street, and was eminently straight-up-and-down and unattractive, but which at the back had its angularity relieved by deep bow-windows, with balconies overrun with China roses and Virginia creeper. And these back windows looked—passing over a small square court, containing a tiny grass-plat, and a paved walk leading to nothing,—upon a wild, neglected, but still beautiful garden, where peeping up among mountain-ash trees, luxuriant brambles, and the

trailing wreaths of the periwinkle, might be seen some fragments of a ruined building which had once been a convent, but which now deserted by its inmates, was fast crumbling into utter decay. The chapel belonging to the convent had alone been saved from ruin by timely repair, and now, fenced off from the garden, was opened for the use of the few Roman Catholics who dwelt in the old city, or its environs.

Its little bell was tinkling away one afternoon, when a young girl stepped out upon the balcony of the bow-windowed house, leaning forward as if listening, not however in the direction of the chapel, but towards the town, from whence might be heard the deep swell of the grand cathedral chimes.

"They have just begun, Grandmamma, we shall be in good time I think," she said, stepping back into the room.

Such a neat, bright, charming old lady rose from a seat near the table as her granddaughter spoke! She was about the middle height, neither thin nor stout, with a fair fresh complexion, and plainly-banded white hair, which looked the whiter from the contrast with a close-fitting black bonnet; her dress and shawl were black also—and what can be more becoming to an old lady?—relieved only by the soft grey tint of her chinchilla boa and muff. Though above seventy years old, she was far more erect than her granddaughter at seventeen, and the pale thoughtful face of the young girl would have been improved by some of the glow and brightness which gave such a charm to the older countenance.

Yet Gyneth Deshon though neither bright, nor pretty, was not altogether unattractive, more especially now as coming forward she offered her arm to the old lady with a sweet loving look, and the

affectionate remark, "Now, Granny, this is the proudest moment of my day; I like walking out with you so much, and I do think people look quite differently at me from what they do when they meet me by myself."

"I'm afraid when you go out by yourself you hunch up your shoulders, Gyneth, and look black at everybody," said the old lady playfully, "so no wonder if they return the compliment by looking black at you."

Gyneth smiled, a singular smile, kindling in the depths of her grey eyes, sending a sudden gleam over her whole face, and then as suddenly disappearing.

"I daresay I did look rather black when I went to buy that flannel for you this morning, Grandmamma," she said, "for I was deep in meditation about a new story which I am making, it is to be something quite different from anything I have written before, and the hero is to be Sumitanda, the prince of Oruma, the Japanese prince, who was converted to Christianity by Louis Almeyda, the Jesuit, you know."

"Or rather I *don't* know, my child, for I have forgotten most of what I once read about those devoted Jesuit missionaries; I remember being very full of it at the time, but old age steals much of our knowledge away from us. Only as you have mentioned the flannel, Gyneth love, let me say, that I wish you would be particular to ask for *Welsh* flannel; I always fancy no other kind has half so much wear in it. Do remember to ask for Welsh next time."

"Yes, dear Grandmamma," said Gyneth readily, and she added, "if I am forgetting, I shall only have to think of Sumitanda, and that will recall it to me."

"But think of putting away Welsh flannel and

a Japanese prince in the same pigeon-hole of your mind!" said the grandmamma, with a humorous glance of her blue eye; "you should really try to arrange your ideas a little better. And now tell me, how is the story getting on?"

"Pretty well, but it is not very easy, I want to know more of what the Japanese were like before the missionaries came to them; they seem to have embraced Christianity so much more readily than most other heathen nations, and I don't fully understand why; Xavier's Life does not tell me half enough."

"We might go to the library and see if we could discover any more books on the subject before going home this afternoon," said Mrs. Deshon, "but now I think we must hasten onwards, must we not?"

They had emerged from the by-street, and were descending a hill towards the lower part of the town, which, wrapped in a soft golden haze, looked almost like one of the dream-cities of the desert, save where the grey tower of the cathedral, and the green fir-capped hill behind, pierced through the mist, and stood out clear against the autumn sky. But the city did not vanish at their approach, melting into cloud-land, and leaving only a drear sandy plain in its place, on the contrary as they drew nearer each quaintly-fashioned house and shop came distinctly into view, with the noble market cross at the end of the street, round which was gathered a crowd of loungers, chiefly soldiers, whose gay scarlet uniform gave colour and brightness to the scene.

It was no magical golden city, but a pleasant old English town, and Gyneth would not have exchanged it for any other dwelling-place in the world, at least so she thought as she walked slowly by her grandmother's side along the avenue

which led away from the High Street, up to the western door of the grand old minster. Just before they reached the door they were joined by one of the canons, and his daughter, a girl about Gyneth's own age. She was small, fair, and plump, with rather insignificant features, rosy cheeks, and a blithe, bonny, though somewhat mischievous smile shining out the moment she spoke ; her name, Rose, exactly suited her, and Gyneth, who was devoted to Tennyson, had a private theory that the line,

“ A rosebud set with little wilful thorns, and sweet as English air could make her, she,”

must have been specially intended for a description of Rose Burnaby. The canon was a grave formal-mannered man, very kind in reality though, and much liked by Mrs. Deshon, who had known him for many years, and who had been a most true and tender friend to his little motherless Rose.

Directly Rosie caught sight of the old lady and her granddaughter, she danced lightly up to them, the brown feathers of her hat dancing in sympathy, and the ripple of that ever-ready smile playing round her lips. But there was scarcely time for greeting, as it was near the hour of service, so with a sudden repression of her mirthful looks, Rose followed Mrs. Deshon and Gyneth into the cathedral, and took her place beside them.

On coming out again however, she deserted them for a moment, and tripped after an old blind bedesman, who led by a little child, was slowly taking his way homewards. What she had to say to him was not very apparent, but he smiled, and the child smiled, at the nothings so sweetly and kindly uttered, and whether with reason or no, poor old Peter Lowell was accustomed to look

forward to his daily greeting from Miss Burnaby, as to one of the greatest enlivements of his monotonous existence.

The canon announced his intention of walking home with Mrs. Deshon, and the two girls set off together to explore the contents of the lending-library. From thence, after a fruitless search for some books relating to Japan, they adjourned to the convent garden, which was not open to the public, but to which the dwellers in that particular street were at all times allowed access.

Gyneth began a confidential account of the plot of her romance about Prince Sumitanda, and meanwhile Rose robbed the romancer of her bonnet, and proceeded to wreath her hair with the leaves of the Virginia creeper. And mixed up with Gyneth's enthusiastic description of her hero were little lively interjections of "Mein liebchen, don't move your head," "you will be quite irresistible in a minute," "His Japan Highness would have given a pair of bran new chopsticks for a sight of you!" and a hundred other bits of merry nonsense, which Gyneth perhaps scarcely heard, and certainly did not appear to heed. And when the work was finished, and a flush of scarlet leaflets crowned the heavy masses of hair that drooped around Gyneth's pale face, Rose gave one fond mischievous glance into the depths of those shady grey eyes, and then stopped the eloquent lips with a kiss, regardless of the interesting crisis of affairs at which the Japanese hero had at that moment arrived.

Inventors are usually jealous of interruption, and one hears of a French man-milliner who when some new device for a 'garniture' or a 'capote' had entered his fertile brain, was wont to suspend outside his door a placard on which was inscribed "M. Herbaut compose!" so fearful was he lest the

chance arrival of some visitor should destroy the airy fabric of his creative imagination ; but contrary to the usual rule, Gyneth Deshon betrayed no annoyance at being interrupted in the thread of her narrative : she goodhumouredly left the development of her hero's fortunes to another opportunity, and her soft undertoned laugh chimed in harmoniously with Rosie's silver peal.

"And now, you dear little dreamer, as you have got out of Japan, let us have a little commonplace conversation," said Rose, with an attempt at gravity ; "how do you like the new minor-canonical?"

"I don't know, I can't judge."

"Can't you? why I have made up my mind already that I don't like him. How wretchedly he intones! It reminds me of Chaucer's Prioress, who 'entuned in hire nose ful seemyly,' which by the by, Chaucer observes in commendation, though I am sure it ought to have been the reverse."

"Rose!" exclaimed Gyneth, in a scandalised tone.

"Ah, I am very naughty, I know," laughed Rose in return ; "but really you must own that my criticism is correct ; and he is the very funniest man to speak to ! He gives one his hand to shake as if it were a loaf of bread, or a soupticket, and one ought to be inexpressibly beholden to him for it."

Gyneth gave a glance of amused comprehension, but would not be betrayed into any disparaging comment on the gentleman in question.

"He was at Corfu some time ago," she observed, "and kindly took charge of a packet for me when he returned home."

"Ah, I was talking to him about your people when he dined with us yesterday ; it seems he was staying with his brother, who is a major in your papa's regiment, so he saw a good deal of your

family ; he said Lambert was his favourite among them."

"Lambert!" echoed Gyneth in disappointed accents ; "why should he be preferred to the others I wonder ? He is not half so handsome and clever as Lawrence, nor so sweet and fascinating as Jeannie ; I never cared as much for him as for the rest."

"But it is five years since you have seen him, is it not ? you might be fonder of him now, you would be I am sure, if he is really so good as Mr. Willis represents."

"Yes, and if he is all that Cousin Lewis has described to me. But I don't wish to form my opinion from report, I mean to wait and judge for myself."

"Beginning with a prejudice against him?" said Rose. "For my part I confess I am rather prepossessed in his favour, and have a great curiosity to see him."

"Which may perhaps be gratified ere long," rejoined Gyneth, "for he is going to Cambridge in January, and will no doubt come and see me on his way there. The doctors think he is strong enough now to face an English winter."

"Oh I am glad. Does he write to you often?"

"Never,—Mamma and Jeannie are my only correspondents, except that just at Christmas-time I generally get a long letter from papa, and some funny little notes in large-hand from the children."

"Don't you long for them all to come home?"

"Sometimes ; but though I should like dearly to see them, I dread leaving grandmamma. And somehow,—I suppose it's very wrong of me, Rosie,—I have a horror of large families, they seem to quarrel so, at least they always do in books."

Rose's eyes opened wide in amazement.

"Why I always like large families so much. I

think there is always some fun going on among them, and it must be so pleasant to have a number of sisters and brothers to care for one, and pet one, and enter into one's little plans. I cannot help being sorry that I am an only child."

But the pensive shade which her face wore for a moment, cleared off as her father appeared on the balcony, and beckoned to her to come to him. "I don't know after all," she said smiling, "that I want any brothers and sisters, I don't think I could spare the least bit of papa's love, I want it all for myself."

"Could I spare any of grandmamma's, I wonder?" thought Gyneth to herself, when Rose had left her, "should I be content if she were to become equally fond of Lambert for instance? And this may come to pass if he spends all his vacations with us. I wonder if he means to; I must ask Lewis on Sunday, and get him to tell me all about my brothers, and why he is so fond of Lambert. Oh, I wish Sunday were come!"

Sunday was a white day always to Gyneth and her grandmamma, not only for George Herbert's reasons, though those were not forgotten, but partly because this 'Lewis' of whom she had spoken came down on Saturday evening every week, and spent the Sunday with them. He was a barrister, upwards of thirty years of age, and known to his London friends as a clever, shrewd, yet kindhearted man, well versed in the literature of the day, and an agreeable addition to an evening party; but to Mrs. Deshon and Gyneth he was a great deal more than this. To the former he almost filled the place of her two sons, one of whom was dead, and the other absent; to Gyneth he was a link with the busy outer world, that world of struggling, thinking human beings, about which she was wont to perplex herself so vainly.

Not that she moulded her opinions on his, or was content to accept his views of men and things ; she did battle with him valiantly on Saturday evenings, and threw down the gauntlet again at his hurried Monday morning breakfasts ; but on Sunday disputes were laid aside by common consent, and the day was given up to peace, cathedral services, good reading, sacred music, and "the Christian Year."

These visits of 'Cousin Lewis' were almost the only break in the peaceful monotony of Gyneth's life. On the other days of the week, she read to her grandmother, visited the poor, walked with Rose, wrote stories, speculated, studied, and dreamed, with but little interruption or variation.

Her grandfather had been one of the canons of the cathedral, and his widow was well known and much respected in the town, so there were of course morning visits to be received and returned, and though Gyneth was not 'introduced,' her grandmother was accustomed to take her everywhere with her ; but morning visits are for the most part dreary work, and though Gyneth felt honoured by the acquaintance of the dean's wife and daughters, and other female dignitaries of the place, she did *not* feel enlivened, and was too reserved and shy to respond to the efforts made for her entertainment. The first eight years of her life had been spent with her father and mother in the West Indies, where Colonel Deshon's regiment was then stationed, the next three years had been passed at school in England, and then she had been consigned to her grandmother's care, a delicate drooping child of eleven, intelligent and thoughtful beyond her age, but with a melancholy languor about her which quite grieved the heart of cheery active-spirited Mrs. Deshon.

Five years in the healthful happy atmosphere of

her grandmother's home had brightened up the languid little maiden in some degree; if Gyneth were never actually merry, she was now seldom sad, and the calm serenity which generally characterized her, was quite as far from dejection as from mirth. Yet under the serene stillness of her outward bearing a whole sea of troubrous thoughts surged unceasingly, and all the mournful problems of the world were revolved again and again in the brain of this quiet-seeming damsel. A fact which was scarcely suspected by any one, though now and then Mrs. Deshon caught a glimpse of her granddaughter's inner mind, and was roused to the gentle remonstrance, "My dear love, don't think so much, try to live more in what is passing around you. You make me feel as if I had done wrong in taking you from school, where you had other young folks to keep you active and lively." And Lewis Grantham too surmised somewhat of the truth, and called Gyneth "his little philosopher," and teased her, and led her on to talk, and then laughed at her; so goodnaturedly, however, that it would scarcely have tried any one's temper, certainly not a temper so sweet as that of Gyneth Deshon.



CHAPTER II.

“Have more than thou shovest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Learn more than thou trowest.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“ RANDMAMMA, Cousin Lewis will be here directly, I see him coming down the street.”

This announcement was made by Gyneth one winter evening, at the door of the kitchen, where stood Mrs. Deshon peering into the oven which the cook was holding open for her, and in the recesses of which might be seen a tray of small round cakes of a most tempting aspect.

Mrs. Deshon was old-fashioned enough to like to be her own housekeeper, and took an innocent pride in initiating ‘Eliza,’ a good-humoured teachable country girl, into certain culinary mysteries which are not to be learnt from any modern cookery-book. Moreover, she considered it necessary that Lewis should be regaled with all the delicacies which the genius of hospitality could suggest, and how could she be sure that Eliza’s unassisted skill would suffice for the preparation of so many good things? Thus it generally happened that when

Gyneth after donning her evening dress, descended to the drawing-room towards tea-time on Saturdays, she found no one there, and that if she proceeded to the kitchen she was nearly sure to discover Mrs. Deshon engaged in the manufacture of some choice species of tea-cake, or superintending the preparation of some more substantial dish.

The old lady turned round when her granddaughter spoke. "Take dear Lewis to the drawing-room," she said, "I will be with him in a minute."

But Lewis would *not* be taken to the drawing-room. When Gyneth met him in the hall, and invited him to come up stairs, he inquired for 'Granny,' as he called her, though a distant cousinship was in reality the relationship between them, and on being told that she was in the kitchen, declared that he would go and take a peep at her there.

So when Mrs. Deshon looked up from her employment of turning over the little cakes daintily with a fork, that all sides might be equally baked, it was to see a curly brown head nodding at her from the door, while a pair of satirical brown eyes scanned her movements, and a row of very white teeth were ostentatiously displayed, as if in anticipation of the work before them.

"Oh, Lewis," said the old lady, shaking her head at him, "I declare you're just the same as you were many years ago, when you used to come creeping after me into the kitchen, and stealing the plums out of my tarts."

"'The child is father to the man,' you know," observed the culprit, advancing warily into the room, "and you don't consider what a refreshment it is to me, Granny, to see a kitchen, I who live in chambers, and dine at a club, and have only an hebdomadal taste of the privileges of domestic life."

"And do you count it as one of them to surprise an old woman in working costume?" said Mrs. Deshon smiling, and glancing down at the spotless white apron, which had been assumed as a protection to her black silk dress.

"Certainly I do, and I only wish all costumes were so becoming. How tempting those cakes look! They are done, aren't they? See, there is a delicious brown one; ah! thank you," and he stretched out his hand with pretended eagerness for the cake which Mrs. Deshon could not resist giving him, and which he devoured with all the appetite of a schoolboy.

Gyneth still stood near the door, a little amused, perhaps also the least bit disdainful.

"Come, go up to the drawing-room, Lewis," said the old lady, as the last crumbs of the cake disappeared, and the lawyer rubbing his hands pronounced it 'delicious.' "There is Gyneth laughing at us for being so silly."

"Gyneth? Oh!" as if he had not noticed that she had followed him; and turning towards her, he added, "Have you been waiting for me? I ought to apologize. 'Regular meals at regular hours, in proper places,' is the maxim of civilized society I know, but a return to primitive simplicity is refreshing sometimes, don't you think so?"

"I don't know, I think I'm rather proud of civilization."

"Ah, my little philosopher looks at everything *en grand sérieux*," he answered playfully, "well, I will try and gratify her by 'behaving pretty,' for the rest of the evening. Lead the way up stairs, fair Propriety."

She shook her head smilingly at the epithet, but accompanied him to the drawing-room, whither Mrs. Deshon soon followed them, to do the honours of the tea-table. It was '*thé à la fourchette*' so

far as Lewis Grantham was concerned, and he did ample justice to it, though not forgetting to attend most assiduously and gallantly to the wants of the two ladies.

"I had a long letter from Lambert this morning," he observed presently, "he seems very anxious about little Edgar, the doctors think Corfu does not agree with the child, and Lambert says he gets thinner and more weakly every day."

"Poor little darling," said Mrs. Deshon, "what does Fanny think of doing with him I wonder, she has not mentioned his illness to me."

'Fanny' was Mrs. Edgar Deshon, Gyneth's mother.

"Lambert writes as if his anxiety were scarcely shared by the others," said Mr. Grantham, "perhaps he observes Edgar more attentively than they do, for he has him constantly with him, teaches him, and all that."

"So I understand; and how forlorn the poor child will be when Lambert goes to college. I wonder could we have him here? English air would soon brace him up, and you would not dislike having a little brother to pet and play with, would you, my dear Gyneth?"

"Oh, Grandmamma, I should like it of all things," said Gyneth; "poor dear little boy: it would be delightful to nurse him, and walk with him, and amuse him. I daresay he would soon get better in English air, as you say, and besides it would be a nice change for him. Jeannie says she thinks Lambert makes him work too hard."

Lewis Grantham paused in the act of sipping his tea, to look across at Gyneth, and very malicious was the incredulity which this glance expressed, "Lambert is the kindest, most considerate brother that ever child had," he said.

"Let me see," mused Mrs. Deshon, "Lambert

will be going to Cambridge very soon, and he might bring Edgar to England with him, and leave him here with me. I will write by the very next mail and propose it to Fanny."

"I am very curious to see Lambert," said Gyneth.

"Only *curious*?" queried Lewis rather sharply; but Gyneth's serenity was undisturbed.

"Remember," she said, "it is five years since I have seen him, and eight since I have been much with him. You know far more of him than I, for he never writes to me as he does to you, and besides it is not much more than a year since you saw him, is it? wasn't it in the autumn of last year that you went out to Corfu in Mr. Hutchinson's yacht?"

"Yes, and I shouldn't mind going again next autumn; it was delightful cruising about among the islands, especially after Lambert joined us. He was well up in all the classic traditions, and had a boy's natural enthusiasm about them, whereas Hutchinson pronounced them all 'bosh,' and would talk of no Greeks but modern ones, and of those only to abuse them. By the by, how Gladstone is getting laughed at for his Homeric enthusiasm!"

"By newspapers and common-place people," exclaimed Gyneth with unusual energy.

"By 'Mrs. Grundy' in short," said Mr. Grant-ham, "and Mrs. Grundy generally has common sense on her side. But he is not without defenders, there is a most amusing letter in the paper to-day, applauding all that he has been saying, and showing a most marvellous sympathy with the poor unfortunate Greeks."

"Amusing?" inquired Gyneth doubtfully.

"Yes to me, though it seems to have been written in all sober seriousness. I will read it to you after tea, I have the paper in my pocket.

Ah—" as Mrs. Deshon rose to ring the bell, "allow me, dear Granny."

" Mayn't I read it to myself?" asked Gyneth, when the tea-things were removed, and her cousin had unfolded the newspaper.

" Certainly, if you prefer it; but I thought perhaps Mrs. Deshon would like to hear it."

" So I should, dear Lewis, it is quite a treat to hear you read, and Gyneth will not mind I'm sure. I will just fetch my netting, and then—." But Lewis Grantham was half across the room before she could finish her sentence, and in another minute he pounced upon the netting-box, which was on a side table, and brought it to her.

The old lady set herself comfortably to work, and Gyneth took up some embroidery, but there was an unaccountable nervousness and agitation in her manner, and she broke her thread so often that half Mrs. Deshon's pleasure in the reading was spoiled by the apprehension that Gyneth had been cheated into buying rotten embroidery thread, which she considered one of the many iniquitous inventions of this Brummagem age, in which cheapness is more considered than durability and worth.

Yet the lawyer read well, and the letter was original and spirited. The cause of the Greeks was eloquently pleaded, the old heroic spirit was declared to be latent in them, and Mr. Gladstone was warmly applauded for having appealed to them through their patriotic traditions, instead of addressing himself only to their feelings of self-interest as some other Englishmen had done. He had not begun, so said the writer, by considering them " rascals," and then treating them as such; he had believed them capable of the same patriotism, the same veneration for their illustrious ancestors as glowed in his own breast, and if these

feelings were ever so dormant in their hearts, surely he had taken the best way to arouse them.

It was evident that the writer was an enthusiast, and had looked at the inhabitants of the Ionian Isles through a somewhat rose-coloured medium, but there was a generous ardour in the sentiments, and a fire and grace in the style which made Mrs. Deshon exclaim as her cousin ceased reading, "Well, that is a very good letter for a young man, and one would rather that the young took too bright a view of their fellow-creatures, whether Greeks or Englishmen, than the reverse. Were it not that he expresses himself so well, I should guess the writer to be scarcely more than a boy, but a very clever and high-minded boy, such a one as will make a fine man."

Gyneth looked up eagerly, a bright flush tinging her cheek, her shady eyes glowing with an inward fire; but if she had meant to speak, the words were arrested by her cousin's saying, "On the whole I am inclined to think this is written by a lady, well-educated, a dabbler in classic lore even, but very young, and just that mixture of enthusiasm and prejudice which makes a zealous partisan."

"But my dear Lewis, a lady, a *young* lady, writing in a newspaper, and about such a subject! Impossible!" said Mrs. Deshon incredulously. "Why no ordinary woman could imagine herself at all a judge of the matter, and moreover, I cannot believe that a lady, and much less a very young lady, would put forth her opinions in such a decided way."

"Forgive me, dear Granny, if I differ from you," said Mr. Grantham lightly; "very young people are more decided than any other; they have not learned to doubt the truth of their own convictions, and they fancy that truth requires only to

be stated to obtain immediate credence ; thus in a moment of eager impulse some innocent young girl sits down and dashes off a letter to the editor of a magazine or a newspaper, when an older and more experienced person would think twice about it, or probably never do it at all, knowing that their opinion even if correct, could be of little value to the public."

He was glancing over the letter again as he spoke, and did not look at Gyneth. Neither did Mrs. Deshon ; she was counting the stitches of her netting with a puzzled thoughtful air, and presently exclaimed, " My dears, I am afraid it is very uncharitable of me, but I can't help thinking this nineteenth century is rather like the times of Rehoboam, when the young men's counsel was taken, and the old men were scoffed at. In my early days young girls went about their home duties quietly and modestly, and were content to take their opinions on public questions from their elders ; now they discuss and argue, and run about to meetings, and write in the newspapers, and the old ideas about modesty and teachableness are quite set aside. Not that it is so with all, there are some like my Gyneth here,—why my precious child !" For at this moment Gyneth rose from her chair, and kneeling down by her grandmother's side, laid her head on her shoulder, and burst into a passion of tears.

" Dear Grandmamma," she sobbed out, " forgive me ; don't think me so very dreadful ; I wrote that letter ; it was very foolish, very wrong of me, but indeed I did not mean any harm ; it was impulse, as Cousin Lewis said."

Unbounded astonishment was Mrs. Deshon's first feeling, then certainly displeasure, but pity for the offender was so mingled with it, that she passed her arm round the weeping girl, pressed

her fondly up to her, even kissed her tenderly, before she nerved herself to say in accents of very gentle reproach, "My child, I won't pretend that I am not shocked and grieved, for I am, but I daresay I am too strict and old-fashioned in my notions. I know it is the custom now for young people to follow their impulses and speak out their minds, and it was expecting too much, to think that *you* would always be different from the other young folks of the day."

"But, Grandmamma, I am worse," said Gyneth bitterly, "I am sure Rose would never think of writing in the newspapers, or of putting herself forward in any way, no, nor would any of the girls that I know. Oh, how could I be so conceited, so horrid! Don't kiss me, dear Grandmamma, be as angry with me as I deserve."

But she might as well have asked a dove to comport itself after the manner of an eagle. Mrs. Deshon was as she said, "shocked and grieved," but these feelings never with her found vent in anger. She continued to caress her granddaughter, and to make excuses for her; any word that seemed to imply blame stole out unawares, and was instantly recalled.

"But, my love," she said after a while, "tell me how you sent this letter, and why you made such a mystery of it."

"Not to deceive you," said Gyneth, raising her head proudly; "please, dear Grandmamma, don't think me so bad as that. I wrote it yesterday morning when you were at the almshouses, and I posted it when I went down to meet you. I did not think it would have been in the paper so soon; I thought if they put it in at all, it would not be till Monday, and then I meant to get Monday's paper, and read it out to surprise you, and make you guess who wrote it; I was so silly, I never

thought of your being vexed. You know I was reading yesterday that letter in which Mr. Gladstone was ridiculed, and the Greeks abused and slandered, and then I thought of what Cousin Lewis had told us, and of all that Jeannie had written about them to me, and I sat down and dashed off this—I cannot speak, but when I write the words all seem to come—I thought that truth must triumph whoever wrote it; and oh, Grandmamma, I was in a way, a fit, my thoughts seemed to choke me!"

"Poor child, poor love," was all that Mrs. Deshon could say, meanwhile she was feeling Gyneth's forehead and hands which were burning hot. "The child is overexcited," thought she, "I have not taken enough care of her. Yet how could I guess she ever troubled herself about such subjects, she who looks so quiet? In my young days I should as soon have thought of crying for the moon, as of distressing myself about a parcel of troublesome Greeks."

Poor Greeks! the tender-hearted old lady was rather hard upon you at this moment, but forgive her, she was not thinking of you in the abstract, but only as having been the unconscious cause of injury to her precious grandchild.

"Come," she said soothingly, "sit down in the armchair, my dearest, and rest your poor hot head. There, that's right, and now I will go and fetch some eau-de-cologne to bathe it, and meantime don't think any more of all this, but talk a little to Lewis; poor Lewis! we have quite neglected him."

When she had left the room, Mr. Grantham tried at first to appear still absorbed in the newspaper, but as two or three minutes passed and she did not return, he could not resist stealing a glance at Gyneth, and then drawing nearer and nearer,

till the curly head was hanging almost over her chair, and the bright eyes beaming down at her with an expression of mingled mischief and sympathy. She discerned only the mischief, and thought he was laughing at her: she would have given much to be able to bring her habitual cold serenity to her aid, but her heart was too full of shame and vexation, and she could only turn away her head that he might not see her tears.

But Lewis did not move, and his glance grew softer and more solicitous, though it was in the drollest tone in the world that he said, "So I find my little philosopher is strong-minded enough to write to a newspaper, and yet weak-minded enough to be terribly distressed when she finds the editor has actually put the letter in!"

"Oh, Lewis," sobbed poor Gyneth, "how can you be so cruel? think how I have vexed grand-mamma."

"Yes, I do think, and I am very sorry for it. What a sweet soul it is! We fine nineteenth-century people will never make such grandmothers; the good dear old people are all getting devoured; when future little Red-riding-hoods arrive, they will find only wolves." And he made a face so absurdly like that which illustrators following tradition have ascribed to Red-riding-hood's wolf, that Gyneth was betrayed into a momentary smile, and the involuntary quotation, "What great eyes you have, grandmamma!"

It was very silly of course, but somehow Gyneth felt the better for having forgotten herself and her own troubles one minute, even in this babyish way. She did not sink back into the chair again, but rose saying, "I must not fret, for it distresses grand-mamma; only, Cousin Lewis, your poor philosopher cannot help being ashamed of having shown herself to be such a conceited goose."

She spoke lightly, but her lips quivered, and seeing this, her cousin dropped his bantering tone, and said quite gravely, "I think you are too hard upon yourself, Gyneth, 'a conceited goose' could not have written that letter, it is very innocent and Quixotic, but there is nothing that you need be ashamed of in it."

"But I ought not to have written it, it was conceited, ridiculous, and oh,—" her voice broke down into a sob; she could not tell *him* what made her grief so bitter—the dread that she had been unmaidenly, that she had acted like one of the "strong-minded women" whom she had been taught to hold in horror.

But Lewis arched his eyebrows, and looked droll again. "You don't expect me to endorse all those hard names, I hope," he said smiling, "I might if I thought you were going really to turn into one of those self-opinionated, argumentative young ladies, upon whom dear granny has been discoursing so eloquently, but I don't believe there is any fear of that; I feel sure your first appearance in the columns of a newspaper will also be your last, at least for a good many years to come."

"Still I can never undo this," said Gyneth, taking up the paper. "May I put it in the fire?"

"If you like, but I think it is a good plan to preserve some memorial of one's defunct follies; I have a whole drawer full of mine, and find it very wholesome to look into it occasionally."

The half-playful suggestion was accepted by Gyneth literally, she cut out the letter and placed it in her workbox, then sat down calmly to work again; calmly that is, so far as outward appearances went, but the sweet face drooped lower than usual all that evening, and self-reproachful thoughts were still busy within.

Mrs. Deshon's eau-de-cologne was scarcely needed, nor the other remedies, a search for which had occasioned her prolonged absence from the drawing-room, but these signs of her loving care were not unappreciated by Gyneth. Oh how could she study to please this dear grandmamma enough! Assuredly she would be more earnest in her efforts for the future, most certainly no more letters to newspapers should ever cause grief between them!





CHAPTER III.

"I saw thee once and nought discerned,
For stranger to admire,
A serious aspect, but it burned
With no unearthly fire."

Lyra Apostolica.

WINTER seemed determined to show that year how mild, and yet how wet and dreary, an English winter can be. But there was sometimes a bright gleam of sunshine in the mornings, and when this was the case Gyneth might generally be found on the downs beyond the city, and always with a slight childish figure by her side, whose thin pale face was lifted eagerly to catch the fresh English breezes, as he climbed his way upwards, and whose blue eyes kept brightening and brightening, as he got gradually into the higher and purer air on the summit of the hills.

"A very pretty little boy," Gyneth thought her brother, and she had learned to mark with delight the dawning bloom which was slowly chasing away the pallor from his cheek, and to watch anxiously for the rare sweet smile which sometimes crept shyly from under his long eyelashes, and then deepened till the fringed lids were raised, and the innocent eyes flashed out in all their beauty.

But the child himself was a mystery to her, a mystery which she had determined to fathom, though she had neglected to obtain the clue to it, as she might have done, from her brother Lambert.

Lambert had accompanied his brother to his grandmother's house, and had remained there for a week before proceeding to Cambridge, and Gyneth, forgetting her prejudices, had welcomed him gladly, and tried to be companionable to him, but her shy advances had met with a far greater shyness on his part; he could not be persuaded to talk of himself, nor much of his home, and when as a last resource Gyneth turned the conversation on general subjects, the few opinions which he did hesitatingly put forth, were so widely different from her own as to produce a feeling akin to antagonism. Only once had he been drawn into something like confidence, and that was the day before he went to Cambridge, when she and Edgar and he had climbed upon the highest ridge of the downs, and sauntering slowly along it, began a desultory conversation, in which many things were touched upon, and some common grounds of interest discovered.

Edgar had submitted to be carried by his brother up the steepest part of the hill, and when first set down clung lovingly to his arm, addressing all his prattle to him, and only now and then casting a furtive glance at Gyneth, whom, spite of a week's intercourse, he seemed to consider almost a stranger; but when presently his cap blew off, and Gyneth, fleeter of foot than Lambert, started off in chase, and brought it back in triumph, the little lips offered a kiss of gratitude, and the disengaged hand stole into hers, and remained there contentedly. She returned the caress with interest, feeling very much pleased, and little imagining that

while she had been cap-hunting, Lambert had remonstrated with the child on his ungraciousness towards her, and had suggested the kiss as a proper acknowledgment of her kindness.

In this happy ignorance she said, smiling, "Now I shall have some hope that Edgar will not quite cry his eyes out when he is left alone with grand-mamma and me."

"I hope he does not mean to cry at all," said Lambert; "he is going to make himself very happy with you, aren't you, Eddie? Only please, Gy-neth, he has set his heart on writing to me every day, and on no one's seeing the letter, if grand-mamma doesn't mind."

"Oh, I am sure she will not; but is he such an accomplished letter-writer already?"

"Accomplished! we won't say much about that, but he knows I can understand his hieroglyphics. Of course I don't mean that the letter need be posted every day, it can grow by degrees and be sent off at the end of the week."

"Oh, Bertie," said the child, pleadingly, "why mayn't I send one every day?"

"Because—" Lambert hesitated and coloured, then added firmly, "it would be a waste of money."

There was a double "Oh!" of wonder on Gy-neth's part, and depreciation on Edgar's, and the child continued, "I know you were right not to let me buy the sugar-lambs in Corfu, Bertie, and I never will buy things to eat with my money any more, but this isn't like that; it's quite, *quite* different; do please, dear Bertie, let me send you a letter every day."

"You have forgotten what I told you on Sunday, Eddie," said Lambert, gravely.

"No, I haven't; you said papa hadn't so much to give in charity as he would like, because we all cost him so much; but then why should Jeannie

dress like the proud queen in the fairy tale, if we haven't enough money to give to the poor?"

Lambert looked distressed; perhaps, because Gyneth turned on him a glance of half-amused and yet half-dismayed inquiry. "Edgar imagines that Jeannie's gay ball-dresses are something very wonderful and costly," he explained; "but I told you you must not concern yourself about that, Eddie; all you have to do is to try to be self-denying and careful yourself."

"But this matter of the postage-stamps is so trifling," said Gyneth, "I will give them to him with pleasure, if you will let me."

"Yes, I know it is nothing in itself, and pray don't think I want to teach Eddie stinginess, but if you knew how they all at home—I mean—" catching up his words in some confusion, "how anxious I am that he should not get into the habit of indulging himself in every fancy merely because it is his fancy."

Gyneth looked up smiling; Lambert's sentiments were so wondrous wise for a youth of nineteen, that she almost expected to see the phenomenon of the "old head on young shoulders," but his light hair and eyebrows, and fair, delicate complexion, made him, on the contrary, look even younger than he was, and the quiet refined face would have been almost effeminate, if it had not been for the resolute, determined expression of the firmly-set mouth.

"But, Lambert, I want to understand," Gyneth said, growing grave again, "ought we really to be so very careful? has not papa a good income?"

"Yes, very fair, but he has had so many expenses—Lawrence's education, and my illness, and other things, and in his position as colonel of the regiment, he is obliged to entertain a good deal, so all together—but, Gyneth, I would rather you

should judge for yourself how matters stand ; the regiment will probably be ordered home this summer, and then you will soon learn to know us and our ways."

"But will papa and mamma care to have me with them ? Grandmamma speaks sometimes as if she should like to keep me always."

"Ah, but there will be some objectors to that, and first of all, mamma, I think, for if Jeannie marries she will want you at home very much, and I suppose you know Mr. Hutchinson is likely to press for the wedding ere long."

"Yes, I know, and I am sorry. Lewis says Mr. Hutchinson has no imagination."

"And is that such an offence in your eyes?"

"Not exactly ; but I never could care in the least for a very unimaginative person ; and a whole life passed with one would be a species of martyrdom, I should think."

"Bertie says you mustn't call things martyrdoms," interrupted Edgar ; "he didn't like Fanny to say it of her music lessons."

"I see, you think it too high a word," said Gyneith reflectively ; "and so it is, you are quite right, Lambert, I am sorry I used it."

Lambert looked as confused as if he had been the person in fault. "It does seem a pity to make words like that common," he said ; "and, besides, I think one feels sorry to find either oneself or other people using exaggerated expressions, talking about 'tremendous inflictions,' and 'insufferable bores,' and 'awful undertakings,' and 'perfect penances,' when much smaller words would suffice."

"You are like grandmamma ; it makes her quite indignant, when one of the drapers in High Street, who is always selling off, sticks a placard with 'Tremendous Sacrifice !!!' on it, to a shawl which he is going to sell for twenty shillings instead of

twenty-five. She says people are getting so accustomed to exaggeration, that they will in time forget how to speak the plain truth at all."

"Those matter-of-fact people whom you dislike so much are the best truth-tellers," said Lambert.

"Yes, perhaps, when they are speaking of facts ; but, oh, how unfair they are when ideas are discussed, and how unjustly they judge of other people because their imagination is not strong enough to suggest to them any other springs of action than those which influence themselves!"

And Gyneth thought of Mr. Hutchinson's harsh judgments of the Greeks, and waxed almost vehement in her indignation. But Lambert smiled, and said quietly, "Want of charity is so common, that one cannot ascribe it to unimaginative people alone ; and if they do not always discern other people's good motives, at any rate they are not likely to invent bad ones for them. I am bound to stand on the defensive, for I am trying hard to become matter-of-fact myself."

"But you never will be so really. Lewis says your enthusiasm was quite refreshing after Mr. Hutchinson's commonplaces. I don't think you can be serious in wishing to become matter-of-fact?"

Lambert did not answer; in the code that he had formed for his own guidance, he had made it a fault ever to speak of himself unnecessarily, and he was already repenting of his casual allusion to the pleasure he felt at finding himself becoming more matter-of-fact. Oh, if there are many people who 'let themselves go,' as it were, who scarcely attempt self-government at all, surely there are others who rule themselves somewhat harshly, whose private code is so Draconian, that it would be actual tyranny if applied to any other than their own poor faulty selves! Only they are

mostly very young, for as people advance in life they learn to know more of themselves; they are too bowed down with the weight of their real sins, to take to themselves an added burden of imaginary crimes.

Lambert Deshon was only nineteen, his conscience was very tender, his standard of right the highest possible, and from having been for many years an invalid, he had lived comparatively out of the world, and had fallen into a habit of jealous introspection, good in so much as it ministered to humility, but almost morbidly acute in the detection of little germs of evil, which had better have been stifled at once, than thought over, and studied, and made the subject of so much inward grief. Grief deepened perhaps by want of sympathy: for his parents and the sister and brother next to him in age were very unlike himself; and though he had unconsciously moulded little Edgar to something of his own likeness, he could scarcely as yet admit him into full confidence.

If Gyneth had known how sad his heart was, she would not have felt so hurt as she did at the sudden coldness which his manner assumed, when passing over her remark, he observed, "Perhaps you may soon have an opportunity of making Hutchinson's acquaintance, and when you know both him and Jeannie, you will see how well suited they are to each other, and how little she is likely to distress herself about his want of imagination."

"But Jeannie does not write as if *she* were unimaginative," said Gyneth: "sometimes there have been pieces in her letters about freedom, and heroism, and so on, which I have thought quite beautiful."

"Ah, that is when she is under the Contessa's influence, a young Greek lady I mean, who is full

of enthusiasm about her country, and of love for all that is grand and noble; no wonder she inspires Jeannie with some of her ideas."

"Then do you mean that Jeannie does not care about these things herself? Oh, I can scarcely believe that; I have always fancied her as high-minded as she is beautiful. Of course I know very little of her really, for since we were quite tiny children I have only seen her by glimpses, but the little I saw gave me such a charming idea of her; she seemed to me to embody the word loveliness, which no one else that I know does, except grandmamma."

"Yes, she is lovely indeed, and most loveable too," said Lambert with more warmth than he had yet shown: "when you know her, Gyneth, you will retract your assertion that you 'cannot care in the least for unimaginative people.'"

Gyneth looked almost impatient; she could not give up her belief in the highminded, intellectual sister who had been for so long the favourite object of her day dreams; she *would* not accept in her stead the pretty, amiable, prosaic creature, which Lambert's remarks had conjured up before her imagination, as the portrait of the real Jeannie.

"Perhaps there is more in her than you give her credit for, Lambert," she persisted.

"Yes," said Lambert quietly. He had a peculiar way of saying yes, not only affirmatively, but interrogatively, and sometimes, as in this instance, with a mixture of the two.

Gyneth gave up the subject in despair, and fearing lest her brother might be offended at the little interest she had shown in all that concerned him, compared with the warm feeling she had expressed towards Jeannie, she began to ask how he liked the prospect of his life at Cambridge, and why he had not rather chosen to go to Oxford.

"I had scarcely a right to choose," he replied: "my father preferred Cambridge for me, from his having been there himself, and having some friends among the authorities there now."

"Well, Cambridge or Oxford, it is much the same," said Gyneth, "you will have two or three years of hard study, learning all that is best worth knowing, and then—oh, I envy you, Lambert!—you will be a clergyman, I suppose, the noblest calling of all."

"I am glad you think it so," he answered warmly.

"Of course I do," and she began to quote Lamartine.

"Humble est le nom de prêtre ? oh ! n'en rougissez pas,
Ma mère, il n'en est point de plus noble ici-bas.
Le prêtre est l'urne sainte au dôme suspendue,
Où l'eau trouble du puits n'est jamais répandue,
Que ne rougit jamais le nectar des humaines,
Qu'ils ne se passent pas pleine de mains en mains,
Mais où l'herbe odorante, où l'encens de l'aurore
Au feu du sacrifice en tout temps s'évapore."

He half smiled, then said gently and reverently, "How poor that seems, compared with the words 'Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of CHRIST, and stewards of the mysteries of God !'"

It was the highest view which could be taken of the calling to which he meant to devote himself; and a feeling akin to awe kept Gyneth silent until she heard him murmur softly the words which follow: "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found *faithful*," and then undismayed by his sigh of despondency, she looked radiantly up at him, and whispered, "'Thou *wilt* not be untrue, thou *shalt* not be beguiled.'"

"One dares not trust oneself," he answered sadly; "so many begin well, and then are disappointed and sink into carelessness or apathy, or

something near it, putting themselves, and their health, and their family, before their parish and the needs of their people."

"Oh, but so many don't; one sees and hears of so many good, devoted, unselfish clergymen; and I don't see why you should be afraid that disappointment will damp your zeal, for you know"—she hesitated, almost afraid to quote any more poetry, lest he should think her a sentimental young lady, and yet too much in earnest to keep back for more than a minute the words she was longing to utter:

"In weariness
In disappointment or distress,
When strength decays, or hope grows dim,
We ever may recur to Him.
Who has the golden oil divine
Wherewith to feed our failing urns,
Who watches every lamp that burns
Before His sacred shrine."

He did not smile at *this* quotation; she could see that he liked it, and that it had cheered him, though he only said, "Thank you for putting me in mind of that."

The brightness of the morning was passing, and it was time to be turning homewards. Lambert perched Edgar on his shoulder, and ran with him down the hill, a feat which highly delighted the child, though the elder brother's breath came in such gasps afterwards, that Gyneth feared the effort had been too much for him. A sisterly affection was springing up in her heart for Lambert; those few moments of confidence had endeared him to her so much.

But, alas! he went away the next day, and the letters which he now occasionally wrote to her were short, and even dry, so that her feeling for him somewhat languished again, and she did not give

a very enthusiastic description of him to Rose, who had been absent during his stay at Mrs. Deshon's, and who on her return demanded "a full, true, and particular account of this wonderful Lambert Deshon, of whom she had heard such contradictory reports."

Gyneth maintained that there was nothing "wonderful" about him, except the extraordinary influence which he had managed to acquire over little Edgar, who continued to defer to all "Bertie's" opinions in his absence just as much as he had done in his presence, or rather far more, since there was now but little opportunity for pleading for a reversal of any of his decrees. Nothing would persuade the child to accept of any indulgence which he thought Lambert would not have permitted him. Though evidently feeling rather lonely and "eerie" the first night after Lambert had left them, he steadily declined all Gyneth's offers to sit with him till he fell asleep, and even refused to have a light left burning in his room, saying, "Bertie said it was not right to be afraid of the dark." How manfully he struggled with his feelings of dreariness and strangeness during the first sleepless hour or two of that night, no one but himself ever knew, but they were too much for him at last, and when Gyneth and her grandmamma were at supper, a patter of little bare feet was heard along the passage, and then the door of the sitting-room was slowly opened, and a little fair head peeped in. The silken curls tangled by restless tossing on his pillow, hung down upon his shoulders in most picturesque disorder, and had been shaken to the front so as to hide the small scrap of white night-dress which would otherwise have been visible. He was very shy of exhibiting himself in his *toilette de nuit*, and would not enter the room till Gyneth went

over to him, and lifting him in her arms carried him to the supper-table, and put him down on his grandmamma's knee. Then with the small white face hidden in those tender, motherly arms, Edgar began a sobbing excuse for what he evidently considered very culpable behaviour, promising that he would be braver another night, and "try not to mind the dark creeping all round him." But he found himself pitied and caressed, instead of blamed, and in a few minutes was seated at the table, wrapped up in his grandmamma's shawl, and devouring one of those delightful little cakes on the manufacture of which Mrs. Deshon so prided herself.

Yet he was not quite at ease even then ; it was plain that he thought he had been cowardly, and that Lambert would have been displeased if he had known it ; nor was he consoled till he had told his brother all about it in his first weekly letter, and had received an answer which contained these words, "I am not surprised that you felt a little forlorn the first night, Eddie, and am very glad that grandmamma and Gyneth comforted you so kindly." A very simple sentence which yet had an almost magical effect upon Edgar, who read it over and over to himself throughout the day, and danced and frisked about so blithely after each fresh perusal, that Gyneth was puzzled to think what it could be that so excited him.

As he became more familiar with her, she hoped that he would prattle freely to her about his home, that home of which she knew so little, though it was her own by right ; but no, Lambert had said he must not tell "some things" about his home life, and he was evidently so perplexed between the things which he *might* and those which he might *not* tell, that the subject was dis-

tasteful to him, and Gyneth ceased to press it on him. She was very much distressed at finding that her brother had thought it necessary to enforce this reserve. "Surely," she said to herself, "he might have trusted me so far as to believe that I would not let Edgar tell me anything I thought my brothers and sisters would not like me to know. And he might have guessed what pleasure it would give me to hear about their books, and their work, and their amusements, those little things which letters never tell." Perhaps she would not have been so much vexed if she had known that the prohibition which dwelt on Edgar's mind had been delivered merely incidentally the day of their walk on the downs, and expressed thus; "Eddie, I did not like to hear you talking of Jeannie's fine dresses before Gyneth, it is not kind to tell her of anything that is wrong, or that you fancy to be wrong, in what goes on at home ; you mustn't do it."

And if Lambert could have foreseen how over-scrupulously Edgar would adhere to his least commands, putting them far before any orders from his grandmamma or his sister, he would certainly have been very careful how he laid them on him. For Lambert's object had not been to gain for himself an "extraordinary influence" over Edgar's mind, but only to lead this much-loved little brother to bend to that *Divine* influence which works silently in the heart of every Christian child, and which, according as it is resisted or submitted to, will cease altogether, or become so all-powerful that the whole life shall be moulded by it, and moulded after a heavenly likeness.



CHAPTER IV.

“ How pleased we wander forth,
When May is whispering, ‘ Come !
Choose from the bowers of virgin earth
The happiest for your home ;
Heaven’s bounteous love through me is spread
From sunshine, clouds, winds, waves,
Drops on the mouldering turret’s head,
And on your turf-clad graves ! ”

WORDSWORTH.

THE wet drear winter passed away at last, and spring brought brightness with it. As Gyneth sat one May day on a mossy bank in the Convent garden, the mild spring sunshine streamed deliciously over her, and little fitful breezes brought to her a faint, sweet fragrance from the primrose tufts which were clustered here and there beneath the trees. She was reading Coleridge’s “ Christabel,” and its weird beauty took such hold upon her, that she was completely absorbed, and scarcely noticed the desultory chatter of little Edgar, who seated on the ground beside her was what *he* called “ carving ” the outside of a cocoa-nut shell with a penknife, and was especially bent upon the fashioning of a certain man with many heads, in imitation of the grotesque figures on his grand-mamma’s Indian cabinet.

"Don't you think it would look very funny if he were to have another head under his arm?" he inquired presently of his sister.

"Very," answered Gyneth, mechanically: she had just come to the description of Bracy's dream, and her heart was trembling for the fate of the poor dove, the type of the pure-hearted Christabel.

"And another peeping out of his pocket," continued Edgar with perfect gravity.

"Yes, very pretty," said Gyneth absently, then perceiving from Edgar's start of surprise that she had given an inappropriate answer, she good-naturedly laid down her book, and proceeded to examine the many-headed individual. Suddenly a man's clear voice was heard carolling through the trees, the blithe tone and tune strangely contrasting with the plaintive words:

"Oh, were I young for thee, as I ha' been
We might now be galloping down on yon green,
And linking it o'er on yon lily-white lea;
And oh gin I were but young for thee."

Gyneth knew the old ballad well, and still better the voice of the singer, but it startled her just then, and she exclaimed, "Lewis at this time of day! What can have happened to bring him here so early?"

He certainly did not look as if anything particular had happened, he came towards her quite slowly, and his greeting was most lazily unconscious of any necessity for explanation. "How d'ye do, Gyneth? Well, Edgar," and then he sat down beside them and took up Gyneth's book.

"I shall begin to think I have been under one of Geraldine's spells, and slept away the afternoon," said Gyneth. "Is this the legitimate hour for your arrival? or is it, as I previously imagined, about twelve o'clock in the morning?"

"It ought to be the afternoon, judging by your book," he answered; "if I were granny, I would not allow poetry till after two o'clock in the day."

She coloured slightly, and said in an apologetic tone, "I could not settle to anything dry to-day; you know that papa may possibly arrive to-night, don't you?"

"Yes: at least I know that the steamer he is coming in is expected at Southampton to-day, and it was a suspicion that you would be in a great state of perturbation that brought me down so early; or rather partly that, and partly a selfish longing for a holiday. And now let us plan some expedition, 'gin I were as young as I ha' been,' I should propose to 'beg, borrow, or steal' some horses, and have a dashing gallop over the downs; but I am growing old and lazy, therefore I leave it to you to suggest some milder mode of amusement."

"I have been wishing to go over to Traversham to see Mr. and Mrs. Helmore, and Rose promised to take me, but her father has been ill, and she has not been able. I am sure she will lend me her pony-carriage if you will drive, only I don't like to leave grandmamma, and I am afraid she will not care to come with us."

"I have been talking to her, and she told me that she has some shopping to do in the town, and can spare you quite well. As for this little being here, I suppose we must take him with us."

"Not if I haven't finished my monster," said Edgar, who rather resented the appellation "a little being," and had just devised a sixth head for his favourite.

"Ah, but we will take monster and all, and you can continue to embellish him as we go along. What a fascinating brute he seems! You've been so busy over him that I haven't seen anything but your curls and the tip of your nose all this time."

Edgar tossed back his golden locks, and lifted his clear soft glance to his cousin's face.

"Bertie shall have my monster when he's done," he observed confidentially.

"Rather he than I," laughed Lewis; "so you don't forget Bertie now he's away from you?"

A demurely uttered "No," was the only response.

"And I suppose sister Gyneth is able to report to him that you are a very good boy?"

There was no answer, and the little head drooped till the fair face was hidden in its curls again. Edgar liked his lawyer cousin very well, and was quite ready to prattle to him about his monster, and so on, but all that concerned his own conduct and feelings was a secret between himself and "Bertie."

Mr. Grantham ascribed his behaviour to modesty, and turning with a smile to Gyneth, said, "I must come to you for Edgar's character when I want it. But now can I be the bearer of any message to Miss Burnaby for you? I shall have time to go to the Close and back before Granny's dinner hour."

So Gyneth went indoors to write a billet to her friend, and Lewis, after upsetting Edgar on the grass, and seducing him into a game of romps, followed, and talked nonsense to Mrs. Deshon, till the note was finished and consigned to his care.

Rose was most willing to lend her pony-carriage, and accordingly it was brought to Mrs. Deshon's door at half-past two o'clock, and Lewis, Gyneth, and Edgar took their places in it, the latter with his beloved cocoa-nut shell carefully tucked under his arm.

Who does not know the delights of a drive through quiet country lanes at that particular time of year, when spring is just ripening into

summer? Who has not watched for the purple orchis blooming on the bank, for the white hawthorn clusters in the hedge, for those breaks through which a peep of the country may be seen, hill and dale stretching out beneath the sunshine, patches of rich red clover alternating with green expanses of springing wheat, fields with daisies pied, and copses blue with wild hyacinths? And oh, the bright fresh hues of everything! the vivid green of the full-leaved trees, the tender green of the grass, the pale delicate green of the newly-bursting leaflets, of the lime buds, and the feathery larches. How one's heart rejoices in it, how one feels impelled to take up the Song of the Three Children, "Oh all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the **LORD**: praise Him, and magnify Him for ever!"

Gyneth did not care to talk, she leaned back silently in the low, cushioned carriage, enjoying in her own dreamy way the beauty and the brightness round her; and Lewis, who would infinitely have preferred conversation, was unselfish enough to indulge his young cousin's mood and leave her undisturbed. It was really a great piece of self-denial, for his mind was brimming over with thoughts, fresh thoughts, quaint thoughts, pleasant thoughts, such as would not always come at his call in his dusky London home, but which flocked to him unbidden in the sweet country air.

Not that he forgot the poor city folk whom he had left behind: when as he drew near the village of Traversham, a band of rosy-faced children came trooping by, he looked at them long and earnestly, and could not forbear exclaiming, "Oh, that I had some of the poor pale children who pine in our London alleys, here! What fun it would be to see them racing about these meadows, finding out

what fresh air and sunshine mean for once in their lives, poor little souls!"

"How much would it cost to bring 'em all down by the railway?" inquired Edgar with a practical business-like air.

"All! my dear Eddie, you have no idea of the numbers; did you mean—"

"Oh," stammered the child, his face flushing suddenly, "I only meant—I have a whole pound now! would it pay for some of the tiny little children coming down in the railway train to play about in the fields?"

Edgar did not in the least understand why so sweet and kindly a gleam should just then soften the keenness of his cousin's eyes, nor why he should turn and say softly to Gyneth, "Truly we may well be bidden to become like little children." But of course he was thinking of the little London children! and no doubt they were very good, they must be, if Cousin Lewis wished to be like them!

"Do you think the pound will keep a little, Edgar? or will it burn a hole in your pocket before the summer?" said Mr. Grantham; "a great friend of mine who has a large parish in the East of London wants to take the children of his schools to the Crystal Palace in July, but it will cost a good deal, and he has not much money at his command. Should you like to give something towards this scheme, do you think?"

Edgar looked doubtful, the Crystal Palace was only a vague idea to him: "I would rather pay to let the children see the buttercups," he said.

"Very well, it shall be just as you like, but I daresay the Crystal Palace party will see plenty of flowers on their way, besides all the pretty things and wonders and monsters in the Palace itself."

"Monsters!" said Edgar, brightening and glanc-

ing lovingly at his six-headed favourite, "are they very funny? would the little children like to see them, do you think?"

"I should think so, since most bairnies have a liking for what is grotesque. But see, here we are."

They had stopped at the door of the rectory, a picturesque old-fashioned place, "red brick and ashlar, long and low, with dormer and with oriels lit," and just beyond was the church, of pale grey stone, just fresh enough to mark it as the work of modern times, but yet designed in so pure a taste as to show that it had been fashioned after the architectural models bequeathed to us by the "Ages of Faith."

The Rector and his wife were not at home, but the servant believed they were somewhere in the village, and would be back soon, and pressed Gyneth to walk in and wait for them. She preferred, however, visiting the church, and went thither with Edgar, while Lewis waited till a lad could be found of sufficient age and steadiness to be entrusted with temporary charge of Rose's frisky ponies.

The north and south doors of the church which faced each other were both open, and from the deep rich gloom of the interior, the eye might wander to the sunlit outer world, the glimpse of winding path flecked with leafy shadows from the trees, the flower-strewn graves with their emblematic crosses, the stately elms in their springtide robe of greenery, and all this framed as it were into a living picture by the arched outline of the porch. But Edgar was intent on examining each of the beautiful windows, and gazed reverently on the "storied panes," while Gyneth softly named to him each prophet, apostle, or saintly father that was there depicted. At length they paused before the figure of the Apostle John, and after a long earnest look, Edgar whispered, "He is like Bertie."

Gyneth did not see the likeness and said so, but Edgar continued, "Yes, see, he is so fair, and his face is so still, that is just how Bertie looks when he is saying his prayers. Ah, see how his golden light falls on my hair! please let me stay here a little while, sister."

Gyneth willing to indulge his fancy, let go his hand and passed on, but when in a few minutes' time she looked back he was still beneath the same window, only now he was kneeling, with his hands clasped together, and his head bowed. She saw he imagined himself unobserved, and turned quickly away again, but her eyes were full of tears, and she longed as Lewis had done before, to resemble this little child. And meanwhile, Edgar was praying that "his Bertie" might be made as holy as the blessed Apostle John, and that he himself might be like "the little good children whom S. John taught to love one another."

At the sound of Lewis' step on the gravelled path, Gyneth went out to meet him, and they sat down together on a bench in the south porch, leaving Edgar to join them when he pleased.

"I never see this church without thinking of my confirmation," said Lewis, "though it was nearly twenty years ago. I was a pupil of Mr. Helmore's then, and it happened to be the first confirmation that was held here after the church was restored, or rather I should say rebuilt. It was at Whitsuntide, just such a day as this too, I remember, so full of spring-time promise."

He did not sigh, he never sighed, but Gyneth fancied a regretful meaning in his tones, and answered rather sadly, "I don't wonder it makes you melancholy to look back, Lewis, I always think it must be happiest to be quite young or quite old, it terrifies me to think of the long years of middle life."

"The burden and heat of the day,' do you wish

to escape that? He is but a poor soldier who shrinks from the hottest part of the fight."

"I know, and sometimes I think I would rather have to suffer and struggle, that it would make life all the more glorious; but at other times—oh, Cousin Lewis, did you never feel like Lord Ronald in the ballad, as if you could say, 'Mither, mak' my bed soon, I'm weary o' this life, and fain would lie doun?'"

"At seventeen!"

His voice was full of wonder and pity, he looked at her with such compassionate anxiety that she smiled: then he detected her at once.

"Affectation, half affectation after all," he said, shaking his head; "the nineteenth century has a mania for being 'outworned in its youth.'"

"And you don't share it? You are not tired of life?"

"Tired, no! I think life is so full, and in some senses so satisfying, that there is a danger of all one's heart and hopes being absorbed in the present, instead of being lifted up to the things beyond."

"I don't understand that," said Gyneth after a pause, during which she had tried in vain to realize what he meant, "I don't know how we could have courage to live at all, except for what life leads to."

"And all those strong, true Bible words about the love of the world, and the pride of life, seem almost incomprehensible to you, I suppose, you have never realized them I mean?"

"I don't think I have, I am afraid I have never thought much about them, certainly not so much as about other warnings, warnings against faint-heartedness, and indolence, and so on."

Looking down into the pale pure face beside him with its thoughtful visionary eyes, Lewis was at

no loss to account for this. Gyneth could freely raise her heart beyond the things of sense, the unseen spiritual world was near and real to her, the great danger for her was that she might grow to rest in this contemplative belief, and forget that faith—the only true faith—must be shown by works.

But a way to escape from this danger was even now being opened for her. Bishop Taylor tells us of “a spiritual person who saw heaven but in a dream, but such as made a great impression on him; and when he awaked he knew not his cell, nor could tell how night and day were distinguished, nor could discern oil from wine, but called out for his vision again. And this lasted till he was told of his duty and matter of obedience, and the fear of a sin had disenchanted him, and caused him to take care lest he lose the substance, out of greediness to possess the shadow.” Just so, Gyneth’s Heavenly Guardian was about to put before her active duties, “matters of obedience,” that she might learn that “heaven must be won not dreamed,” and that the fruit of heavenward aspirations should be a life of heavenly deeds.

For Lewis Grantham the danger was quite different. As he sat there in the church porch with his arms folded, though rather a thin, delicate-looking man, not by any means what novelists call “a picture of manly health and strength,” there was yet such a fund of life and energy in his bright dark eyes, such an easy satisfied smile upon his lips, that it was evident he was one of those who find the world very pleasant, and are sometimes betrayed into taking their portion here, and forgetting “the things which shall be hereafter.” The pride of life! he felt it in every vein; pride, not so much in anything peculiar to himself, as in the powers and privileges which he

shared in common with the great human race. All that man has won, all strength, and knowledge, and influence, all dominion over nature, all might in science and art filled him with a thrilling consciousness of the powers inherent in the human mind, and of the richness and glory of a life of intellectual toil; and then the world was so beautiful, its pursuits so engrossing, its interests so many and vast, how could the future world seem other than vague and far off? Thus it was with him at times, but he did not give himself up without restraint to these feelings, for he had read and taken home to his heart the wonderful words, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, yea, and *his own life* also, he cannot be My disciple;" and he was striving daily to mortify his keen love for the things of this world, and to attain at least in some measure to that state of which an Apostle wrote, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."

"Rather a different set of duties from those which have been yours hitherto seem likely to arise for you now, Gyneth," he said presently; "I suppose Granny has decided to let you go home for a time."

"Yes, I believe she thinks mamma will want me now Jeannie is married. I'm afraid I shall make a very bad substitute, but I must do my best."

"And Gyneth—I *must* say it—do try to work heartily with Lambert; you will have time to get really acquainted with him in the long vacation, and you will soon find out how thoroughly good and unselfish he is, and what a wholesome influence he exerts over the younger ones; do pray do your best to keep this up; don't for the sake of carrying out your own theories set yourself in opposition to him."

"You talk as if Lambert were everything, and papa and mamma were nonentities," said Gyneth, a little hurt, but gentle in tone as ever.

"Do I? then I beg their pardon and yours," said Lewis quickly, "but what I have said of Lambert is true all the same."

"How very fond of Lambert you must be!"

There was a slight tinge of jealousy in the tone, and Mr. Grantham detected it, but perhaps was not so much shocked at it as he ought properly to have been, for his manner was even more than usually cordial as he said, "Lambert *is* a great favourite of mine I own, but I love justice even better, and I want my little philosopher to be perfectly just, which she is not always on this particular subject."

"And you think I shall proceed from unjust thoughts to unkind actions? You have pictured to yourself *me*, termagant me, oppressing poor Lambert, endeavouring to supplant him in everybody's affection, misinterpreting his conduct, refusing to admire his goodness, and in fact conducting myself in a decidedly hateful manner! Oh, Cousin Lewis, I am so much obliged to you for the compliment!"

The contrast between this imaginary portrait of herself and the real smiling self which was glancing up at him with such innocent archness, was almost too much for Lewis's prudence; he hated flattery and never meant to be guilty of it, but he found his little philosopher so charming in this mood of unwonted playfulness, that it was with difficulty he forbore from hinting as much to her. He fairly ran away from the temptation by suddenly leaving her, and walking down to the churchyard gate, ostensibly to see if his rustic protégé were keeping faithful guard over carriage and ponies.

He came back almost immediately, and an-

nounced that he saw Mr. and Mrs. Helmore in the distance, so Gyneth summoned Edgar and went to meet them. But her mind was running on what Lewis had been saying, and before joining them she paused to say, "Lewis, you so often talk to me of Lambert, I wish you would tell me something of Lawrence."

"Lawrence!" Mr. Grantham's face grew comical. "What can I say of him? I have not seen him since that day I spent with him in France two years ago, when he was on his way from Paris to Bonn, and then he seemed to me a picturesque little hybrid, half English, half foreign, or as he grandly described himself a complete cosmopolitan!"

Gyneth looked at once amused and disappointed, but further discussion was cut short by the approach of the old clergyman and his wife. A few pleasant minutes were passed at the rectory, where kind Mrs. Helmore would fain have detained them to partake of an early tea, but Gyneth was anxious to return to her grandmamma, and afraid lest by any chance her father should arrive earlier than was expected, and not find her to welcome him, so after explaining that Colonel Deshon's regiment had been ordered home a month sooner than had been expected, that she was likely to reside with him chiefly for the future, and that this might possibly be her last visit to Traversham at least for some time to come, she took an affectionate leave of her good old friends and hurried away. Nor did she encourage Lewis to linger on their homeward road, though at another time she would have been tempted to pause and listen for the soft notes of the birds, who after having dozed through the afternoon, were waking once more into twittering song before retiring finally to rest for the night.

Spite of her haste, what she had feared actually

came to pass. When they reached Mrs. Deshon's house, the door was standing open, and Mr. Burnaby's groom who had come up to take the carriage home, rushed at once to the ponies' heads, exclaiming, "If you please, sir, the colonel and his lady have come, and Eliza said I was to tell Miss Deshon so at once, because they are in a great hurry to see her."

Gyneth and Edgar sprang out, and ran into the hall without waiting for Lewis's assisting arm, but at the foot of the stairs Gyneth turned back. "Come too, Lewis," she said, and through the trembling agitation of the tone, he could discern the trust she had in him, and how confidingly she, to whom, poor child! father and mother were almost strangers, turned for sympathy to him who in the eyes of the world, was only "a very distant cousin."





CHAPTER V.

"Twist ye, twine ye! even so,
Mingle shades of joy and woe,
Hope, and fear, and peace, and strife,
In the thread of human life."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THIS was a very happy party that circled round the tea-table that Saturday evening; Gyneth between her father and mother, Edgar on his papa's knee, and Lewis opposite, while Mrs. Deshon, the very picture of grateful joy and pride, presided over the tea-equipage, taking care to move the urn a little to one side that it might not intercept her view of her son's face. He was her eldest born, and now her only living child, her mother's heart had yearned over him while absent, and was full to overflowing with the gladness of seeing him once more.

Her joy was not unshared by him, but his was not a very demonstrative nature; he sat there quietly sipping his tea, stroking his little son's hair from time to time, responding with ready attention to each remark of his mother's, and sometimes glancing with grave interest at Gyneth, who flushed with excitement was looking unusually animated, and wellnigh pretty.

about him an atom of that hearty warmth and frankness, which is popularly supposed to be characteristic of a soldier's manner ; his upright martial bearing, and dark moustache were the only outward indications of his profession : he looked unmistakeably a gentleman, and had the polished manner of one accustomed to mix a good deal in society, but his conversation savoured more of the scholar than the soldier, and he never once mentioned his regiment, or seconded in the least his wife's allusions to "our officers," "our quarters," &c. Mrs. Edgar Deshon was a pleasing, wonderfully young-looking woman, with a very sweet voice, and a graceful fashion of moving and speaking which attracted Gyneth's admiration at once. She had a great deal to say both in remark and question, but the gentleness of her tones prevented this ready flow of conversation from seeming at all overpowering, and her deferential manner to her husband and her husband's mother was as pretty in its way as the caressing, protecting fondness, which she showed towards her son and daughter. Before the evening was over she had told them all about Jeannie's marriage (which had taken place in February) the voyage to England, the arrival at Southampton, her plans for the future, and so on, and had given them a picturesque description of the beauty of Corfu, to which was appended by way of contrast, a lively sketch of the horrors of the English seaport town, which was the regiment's present destination. Then came cleverly touched outlines of the appearance and character of her two younger children, Fanny and Katie, whom she had left at an hotel in Southampton, under the care of Katie's nurse, a trustworthy elderly person, "a widow of one of *our* sergeants." This last phrase and two or three similar ones called up an almost imperceptible frown on Colonel Deshon's brow, but he did

not say anything, and his wife talked on in blissful unconsciousness of having said aught amiss. Gyneth, whose heart was longing to love and admire, was perfectly satisfied for this one night at least, and when she retired to rest at last could not sleep for thinking over all the pleasant words and looks of this darling mother, whose soft loving kisses were still fresh upon her cheek. But Lewis Grantham as he paced up and down the little court in the moonlight, smoking a solitary cigar, wore an air of anything but satisfaction, and the bent of his reflections was far from being cheerful or charitable.

"Yes, take her," he muttered, addressing some nameless person, "take her, and dress her up in furbelows, and marry her to one of 'our officers!' That little cousin of yours, the stray honourable who joined the regiment lately, or that button-maker's son with unlimited cash, who gives balls at his sole expense, 'so goodnaturedly,' and is 'positively a very gentlemanly young man!' You are just the same as ever, just as agreeable, and good-looking, and stylish, just as affectionate, and winsome, and engaging too, if there was only something *in* you, one might like you very much; but that you should be the wife of such a man as Edgar, and the mother of two such children as Gyneth and Lambert! it is at once marvellous and provoking; you would have done very well for some commonplace individual, but that Edgar Deshon should have chosen you is incomprehensible and intolerable." Then he became ashamed, as well he might be, of his own harsh thoughts. "How abominably uncharitable I am! Talk about loving justice, and then run down poor Fanny in this contemptuous pitiless way. If only I were sure she would do no harm to Gyneth! but she can't, the child has a soul of a different order, she

is as deep as her mother is shallow. There I am again ! what business have I to decide that Fanny has a shallow soul ? and when one comes to think of it, how can one venture to call any soul shallow, seeing that each is created with infinite capacities for good, nay more, with the capacity of knowing and loving Him Who is Infinite?"

He threw away his cigar, and went up to his room, thinking no more uncharitable thoughts that night. And as he passed Gyneth's door he said to himself, " Little cousin, you have the pure heart to which all things are pure ; I ought not to fear that this new phase of life will harm you."

Gyneth was not at once called upon to leave the peaceful shelter of her grandmother's home. When Colonel Deshon and his wife set off on Monday morning for what the latter stigmatised as " that atrocious place Harbournouth," they announced an intention of securing a furnished house which they had heard was to let, on a common at some little distance from the town ; " and then, my love," continued the lady, " we will settle ourselves and our goods therein with all possible speed, and when we have got everything quite comfortable, we will send for you and Edgar, but I could not think of subjecting you to all the discomforts of the first weeks in a new house."

The kind grandmamma begged that little Fanny and Katie might come to her while the " settling" was being effected, but Mrs. Edgar declared she " couldn't think of such a thing, they were such noisy troublesome little chicks that she really couldn't feel justified in quartering them on any one ; dear grandmamma must come and stay with her at Harbournouth very soon, and then she could see just as much or as little of the children as she liked."

Though Gyneth now looked forward eagerly to

taking a daughter's place in her rightful home, she could not but be glad to be left a little while longer with her grandmother; she knew how lonely the good old lady would be without her, and could sometimes have found it in her heart to beg that she might be allowed to stay with her always. But Mrs. Deshon had made up her mind that it would not be right to keep Gyneth from her parents, and though Lewis had at one time persuaded himself, and endeavoured to persuade her, that she would be justified in doing so, she had remained firm to her own convictions. "For you know, my dear boy," she had said, "I am an old woman, and cannot expect to live very many years longer, and if I were to keep my poor child all to myself while I live, how lonely and forlorn she would feel when I am taken from her, and how sad it would be for her to have to go to her father's house as to a strange place. Besides God gave my son his children, and he has a right to have them with him when he likes, they owe more love and duty to him than to me, and I hope Gyneth will prove a good and useful daughter to him, and find out how to be helpful to her brothers and sisters. If she gets tired or ill, and wants a rest, she can come to me, and anyhow I daresay they will spare her to me sometimes. More than this I ought not to ask, for I must not be selfish, you know, Lewis."

So when in about three weeks' time Colonel Deshon came to stay a few days with her, and proposed taking Gyneth and Edgar home with him, she made no opposition, and would not distress either them or their father by dwelling on the loss to herself. If when Gyneth was gone her spectacles had an unaccountable facility for becoming suddenly bedimmed, so that she was often obliged to pause in her work, if the glorious chants that went up day by day within her beloved Ca-

thedral, lost somewhat of their harmony to her because she could no longer hear her child's voice joining in them,—at any rate she never said so to any one, but hid her regret in the bravest silence.

Yet perhaps two people guessed at it, and firstly Lewis—poor Lewis, who spent his Sundays with her as regularly as ever, and was even more tender and considerate, and affectionate to her than he had been before, but who in the midst of his cheerful talk would look round sometimes as if there were something missing, and who could no more than she help paying such devoirs to Gyneth's favourite canary as surely no wee birdie ever received before, and directing wistful glances to the now unused piano, upon which Gyneth had been wont to play to them such music as they both loved. Yet Lewis by no means became addicted to melancholy ; his life had many interests, and now that one was withdrawn he only threw himself more heartily into those which remained. Sometimes too when Mrs. Deshon was alluding regretfully to the past, his face would gleam and brighten with a feeling which had reference rather to the future; not the far future either to which she looked forward so trustfully, but the future of "a few years hence," years which might perhaps never come to him, as of course he owned, but which spite of that "perhaps," his hopes built upon almost unconsciously.

Rose Burnaby was the one other person who divined, and thoroughly sympathised with Mrs. Deshon's feelings, for bright Rose missed her more thoughtful friend very sadly, and would have willingly endured to hear innumerable histories of Japanese princes, and other out-of-the-way heroes, if so she might have still had Gyneth near her to talk with, fondle and tease. As it

was she was obliged to content herself with doing what she could to console and cheer Mrs. Deshon, not forgetting to extend some slight portion of her charity to Lewis Grantham, partly because she "was sure the poor man must miss Gyneth so much," but partly also it must be confessed, because the barrister was very amusing, and little Miss Rose who was rather dull without her friend, was greatly in want of amusement just then.

Meanwhile Gyneth was becoming domesticated in her new home, a very different place in many respects from the one she had left. The house was what advertisements call "A genteel and commodious villa residence;" and its lofty rooms, large windows, broad staircase, and spacious well-aired hall would have delighted the heart of a sanitarian, and certainly abundantly justified the advertiser in his choice of the word commodious. The gentility was not less palpable, but might better have been dispensed with, especially as displayed in would-be Grecian urns, and affected stone nymphs supporting the roof of the entrance-porch. Gyneth's fastidious taste was horrified at the first sight of these adornments, and she was quite grateful to Edgar for making faces at them, and to her father for saying with his quiet smile, " You see we have to submit to live in a pseudo-Gothic villa with pseudo-classic ornaments ; it requires some amount of philosophy, doesn't it ? "

But the sunny drawing-room fragrant with flowers, and strewn with foreign knick-knacks which the Deshons had collected in all parts of the world, looked most agreeable and inviting, and the view from its windows of the open common, and the blue sea beyond, was much pleasanter than anything Gyneth had ventured to expect at "that atrocious place, Harbournouth." Well might Mrs. Deshon congratulate herself on having

found such a pleasantly-situated house, and sigh over the fate of some of the captains' and lieutenants' wives, who were obliged to resign themselves to inhabiting the military quarters assigned to them within the town. She was alone in the drawing-room when her husband and children arrived, and in answer to Gyneth's eager inquiry for Fanny and Katie, replied that she had asked Lambert, (who had just come home for the vacation,) to take them for a walk, and that they had not yet returned.

"They will be back very soon," she added, "for it is nearly half-past six now, and our dinner-hour is seven. Will you like to come up stairs, my love, and take off your bonnet?"

Gyneth assented, and was soon installed in a large, comfortable bedroom, the grand attraction of which was a fire-place ornamented with dolphins. *Why* dolphins, she could not determine, and was glad to turn from the consideration of their extreme inappropriateness to look at a pretty water-colour drawing of one of the Corfu churches, which hung over the mantel-piece. "Is that one of Jeannie's sketches?" she inquired of her mother, who was leaning against the window-frame, fanning herself with a quaint fan of coloured straw, which awakened Gyneth's reminiscences of the West Indies.

Mrs. Deshon turned round to look. "Oh, no, that is one of mine, it is the church of the Ascension, near Castrades; I have whole portfolios of sketches which I can show you if you care for them. Jeannie draws very nicely, but she is sadly lazy about it, I don't think she finished more than two sketches the whole time she was in Corfu."

"Do any of the others draw?"

"Only Lawrence, Lambert cares very little for accomplishments of any sort, and as for Fanny,

old nurse says truly that ‘all her fingers are thumbs,’ she can do a great deal with her head, but nothing with her hands. Lawrence used to draw famously, I hope he will bring me some sketches from Bonn, I do so love Rhine scenery, and he has taken some nice excursions to Coblenz and the Drachenfels, and so on lately, so his portfolio ought to be full.”

“He is coming home soon, is he not? I do long to see him.”

“Yes, we expect him to arrive in about a week or ten days from this time. Papa has decided to let him try his chance at the next competitive examination for admission to Woolwich academy. He is the lowest admissible age, sixteen, but he is so clever I think he is nearly sure to succeed, and his foreign education will be a great advantage to him. I do believe he is more French than English.”

Gyneth thought that rather a doubtful advantage, but she said nothing, and began her toilette for the evening.

When she pronounced herself ready, her mother looked at her with a fond yet anxious gaze. “I wish we could put some roses into those pale cheeks of yours, my love,” she said, “we must try what sea-breezes will do, but in the meantime I really must not let you wear such colourless dresses, they make you look even paler than need be. A brighter colour would be far more becoming to you than those light blues and browns.”

“But I am of Jenny Wren’s mind, mamma,” objected Gyneth smiling, “and indeed my palleness is no sign of ill-health, for I am perfectly well, so please do not be unhappy about it.”

“No, I shall not be unhappy so long as you *are* well; but I don’t see why you shouldn’t *look* well, too. I like to see my children looking bright and bonnie, Jeannie was a very rose for bloom.”

"Yes; but please, dear mamma, you must not expect me to be like Jeannie in any way," Gyneth answered serenely and sweetly, "I can't be pretty, or loveable, or charming, I know that quite well, though I will try to be and do all you wish in other ways."

Oh, how the sensitive heart trembled beneath that outward calmness! and what a relief it was when her mother drew her up to her and, kissing her fondly, said, with a smile, "My dear child, we mothers don't make odious comparisons, or expect our daughters to be all of one pattern; you are quite charming enough in *my* eyes, and in papa's too."

If Lewis Grantham had seen the beautiful look of tenderness in the mother's face just then, would he have still said that there was nothing in her?

"I think it is almost time for us to go down stairs," said Mrs. Deshon, as she fastened a spray of rich red rosebuds in the front of her daughter's dress, "our little cousin, Anthony Waller, is going to dine with us to-day, I was sure you would not mind him, for he is such a very nice boy, and papa promised his mother that he should be with us as much as possible. She is so very particular about his not getting into the foolish ways of the fast young men of the regiment."

'Little Cousin Anthony' was Lewis's 'stray honourable,' and an utter stranger to Gyneth, so she asked rather timidly if he were really only a boy.

"Oh yes, indeed, that is to say, he is about nineteen, and such a simple creature, you will feel at home with him in a minute. Ah, my darlings, is that you?" as a tall girl of thirteen, and a tiny maid of four, came rushing eagerly up the stairs,—"don't quite annihilate us, please, and don't keep sister Gyneth more than one minute, for I

hear Ellis announcing that dinner is ready, and papa doesn't like to be kept waiting. You may come down to dessert, you know." A vehement hug from Fanny, a little soft kiss from Katie, and Gy-neth was obliged to pass on, wishing very much that dinner were not a necessity, or that something would call her unknown cousin away before dessert began, so that her first efforts at acquaintance with her sisters might not have to be conducted under the eye of a stranger.

She was glad that Lambert met her at the drawing-room door, and his brotherly greeting was very pleasant; little as she had seemed to know him before, her feeling towards him now was almost familiar, compared with the strangeness which she felt with the others. Her father quietly presented Mr. Waller to her, and judging by his inch of forehead she thought her mother's description of him as 'a simple creature' might be very true in *one* sense, but he was older looking than she had expected, and had rather a supercilious manner, so she felt somewhat alarmed by him, and was glad that her place at dinner was not next to him. She sat at her father's right hand, and beside her was Lambert, to whom she found she could talk quite comfortably about Cambridge and her grand-mamma, and Edgar's improved looks, while her mother did the agreeable to the formidable 'Cousin Anthony.'

Thus the dinner passed quickly, and with the dessert came the children, first Edgar, leading little black-haired Katie by the hand, then Fanny, tall, wild, and awkward, and looking very much inclined to run away again. Edgar and Katie trotted round to Mr. Waller, Edgar to shake hands with him demurely and silently, Katie to climb upon his knee, and say coquettishly, "How many sugar-p'ums will doo doo doo 'ittle pussy-

tat?" Fanny nodded a rather uncouth greeting to him from across the table, and then subsided into a chair which Lambert had placed for her between himself and Gyneth. She had a fair complexion tanned by exposure to the sun, crisp brown hair that would not lie smooth, a wide mouth, and eyes which, though both very blue and very bright, were rather small than otherwise. So were Katie's, which shone like two round black beads as she lifted them with her roguish, baby smile to Mr. Waller's face, but she was rather a pretty little child notwithstanding, and there was something very droll and piquant in her tight black curls, saucy little nose, and button-hole mouth, with its glimmer of small white teeth. But, oh, how immeasurably superior Edgar seemed as he stood with his air of graceful, childish dignity by Lambert's side, his gaze turned lovingly on his brother's face, while his little soft voice might be heard replying, with grave politeness, to his mother's offers of strawberries, currants, &c.

"Well, Fan," said Colonel Deshon presently, "you will be quite happy now you have got your brothers back, and a new sister besides."

"Lambert says he'll teach me Euclid!" exclaimed Fanny in a voice which had the unenviable notoriety of being the only inharmonious one in the Deshon family.

"Indeed! Lambert, you will have enough to do in your vacation if you undertake Fanny as well as Edgar."

"Gyneth can teach Edgar," said Fanny, "I want to have Lambert all to myself."

Edgar's face darkened, and he seemed about to protest against this monopoly of *his* Bertie, but Lambert smiled at him so reassuringly that he changed his mind, and held his peace.

"I suppose," drawled Anthony Waller, "Fanny

doesn't agree with those people who think that ladies should never display their learning; my sister Grace would be—aw,—quite indignant if any one accused her of understanding Euclid."

"That's just like that stupid piece in 'Contes à ma Fille,'" said Fanny, "where it says if a woman is learned it should be her first duty, her greatest care, to conceal her learning from everybody. Now *I* think that's humbug!"

Mrs. Deshon raised her eyebrows, shrugged her pretty shoulders, and glanced comically at Lambert. "I hope you will teach something besides Euclid," she said.

"Yes, it's rather a case for the 'twopence extra for manners,' isn't it, my pretty pussy-cat?" smiled Anthony to Katie.

No one appeared to resent this remark of his, though to Gyneth it seemed slightly impertinent. Her father looked absent and unheeding, Mrs. Deshon amused, and Fanny perfectly unconscious, only Lambert's face was a little dropped with an expression resembling *shame*.

Gyneth was glad for his sake when the dessert was over, and Fanny safe in the shelter of the drawing-room; she tried to make friends with her; but received such odd brusque answers as made it difficult to proceed, and when presently she turned away to play boopeep with Katie, Fan, as if glad to be released, darted off to a corner of the room, and seizing on Helps's 'Spanish Conquest,' pored over it till the gentlemen came in to tea, when, at a hint from her mother, she retired for the night. Music and general conversation passed the time till half-past ten o'clock, and then the young officer departed, and Gyneth very weary, and in a maze of puzzled thoughts, followed Fan's example, and retired to rest.



CHAPTER VI.

“Non si deve dar tanto a Pietro,
Che Paolo resta indietro.”

Italian Proverb.

WHEN Gyneth descended to the dining-room the next morning at eight o'clock,—the time which her mother had named as the family breakfast-hour,—she found no one there, and the preparations for the meal had reached no further than the laying of the table-cloth. She was turning away again, when she saw that a door which led into the library was open, and going in, she discovered Lambert seated at a little table which was drawn close to the open window, and upon which stood a pile of very formidable books.

He came forward to wish her good morning, and observing her air of surprise, added, “I hope you are not very hungry, Gyneth, for I am afraid you will have to wait a little while for your breakfast.”

“Won't papa and mamma soon be down?”

“Papa has gone to an early parade, and will most likely breakfast at the mess-room. We are always very punctual when he is at home, but on the mornings he goes out our old man-servant declines to favour us with an eight o'clock breakfast; indeed, I think he rather questions the necessity of our having any at all.”

"I wonder mamma submits to such domestic tyranny," said Gyneth, smiling.

Lambert made no answer, and his face was provokingly unreadable, so she continued,

"I think I may as well begin my letter to grand-mamma, then; will it disturb you if I write at this table?"

"Not in the least, I will clear a place for you;" and while she fetched her writing-case, he moved his books on to a chair, placed another for her, and finally ran up to his room to fetch a bottle of ink to replenish the inkstand, which was found to be empty.

Gyneth had a great deal to say in her letter, though it was not yet twenty-four hours since she had parted from her grandmother, and she wrote on steadily, without once raising her eyes, till at length the noise of something whisking against the window-pane made her look up.

The something was a piece of honey-suckle, and it was Mrs. Deshon who had thus attracted the notice of her two students, as she called them. She looked very bright and fresh in her delicate morning-dress, among the folds of which little Katie was making believe to hide herself in hopes of tempting Gyneth to another game of peep-bo. Both mother and child had their hands full of flowers, and had apparently been making a tour of the garden, which was well cultivated, though not very large; the early walk had given them an appetite, and their errand to the window was to inquire if breakfast were ready. Gyneth peeped into the dining-room, and announced that there was a loaf, some plates, but nothing more.

"Oh, dear, that tiresome Ellis!" said Mrs. Deshon, "he ought to be prosecuted for cruelty to animals, keeping us famishing all this time. I wish you would ring the bell and tell him to make

haste, Lambert; he *does* mind what you say a little, I think, for he never used to be quite so unpunctual before you went to Cambridge."

She wandered away into the garden again, and Lambert rang the bell as desired. But no Ellis appeared, and after waiting a few minutes he rang again more peremptorily, after which the old man bustled in, muttering something about the cook keeping such a bad fire, that he couldn't get the water for the urn to boil. Lambert's orders were given in his mother's name, but so decidedly that they admitted of no rejoinder, and when the old servant had left the room, Gyneth playfully congratulated him on his triumph. Cups and tea-spoons began to rattle in the dining-room, and presently the hissing of the urn was heard, upon which Lambert rose and went to make the tea, as if it were the most natural office in the world for him to perform. Fanny and Edgar made their appearance at this moment, and were sent to call their mamma, without any comment being made on their coming down so late; a great relief to Gyneth, who had been fearing that Edgar's unpunctuality would bring him under the ban of Bertie's displeasure. Poor Gyneth! she could not quite get rid of her preconceived notion that Lambert was over particular, and inclined to domineer, and she watched tremblingly for any signs of harshness towards Edgar, not knowing how she should bear to hear any fault found with the darling little brother, whom—child as he was—she reverenced as almost perfection.

The mamma and children returned together, the servants were summoned, and Mrs. Deshon read a psalm and a short prayer. Then breakfast commenced, and while Lambert provided his mother and sister with eggs, toast, and butter, Fanny made a vehement onslaught on the loaf, and cut

off a hunch strongly suggestive of ploughboys, which she proceeded to devour with a corresponding allowance of marmalade. Katie declined the routine of a place and plate of her own, and peregrinated round the table like a veritable pussy cat, begging for "someking nice," and finally settled on the half of Edgar's chair and amused herself with stealing his tea, and Lambert's bread and butter. Mrs. Deshon inquired affectionately how Gyneth had slept, and whether she had found her room comfortable; then turned to discuss with Lambert an account she had heard the day before of a governess whom she thought of engaging for her younger daughters. After breakfast she went away for a few minutes to order the dinner, but soon returning, carried off Gyneth with her to the drawing-room, to show her some portfolios of sketches. They were very pretty, and pleasant to look at, occasionally a little unnatural, or, as Mr. Ruskin would say, "untrue," but on the whole very well done, and indicative of both talent and industry, though not of the highest order. Gyneth much enjoyed looking over them, but even while apparently engrossed in examining some lovely views of Trinidad and Santa Lucia, could not forget that the three children had been left to their own devices, and would probably interrupt Lambert in his studies.

"What do Fanny and Katie generally do in the mornings, mamma? Could I help them in their lessons at all?" she inquired at last.

"Why Katie has scarcely begun to learn anything yet, she is only four years old, you know, and Fanny has had no regular lessons for some time; I daresay Lambert will teach her something; at all events, the children are quite safe with him, he will not let them get into mischief."

"Yes, only—I thought Lambert liked to study.

in the morning, he seems to wish very much to—"distinguish himself," she was going to say, but it struck her that that was not exactly Lambert's aim, so she changed it for, "to get on at Cambridge, and take a good degree. I was going to ask you if you would like me to go on teaching Edgar as I have been used to do, or whether you thought Lambert would rather have him in his own hands again while the vacation lasts."

"Oh, my love, I don't know I'm sure; if I get this governess that I am thinking of, I hope she will be able to undertake Edgar, as well as Fanny and Katie; in the meantime, Lambert and you can settle it between you, as you like best, only pray don't overtask yourself. I always think children's lessons a terrible penance, and Fanny *will* have everything explained to her, and ask question after question till one feels hopelessly bewildered and ignorant. I am positively quite afraid of her."

"Ah," she continued, as Gyneth was replacing a sketch which she had just examined, in the portfolio, "turn that round, my dear, there is something on the back; a little etching I did from fancy, years ago, before you were born. See, it is a scene in Scott's 'Bridal of Triermain,' there is Sir Roland de Vaux asleep, and there is his vision, the maid, with 'her heavenly brow,'—

'With her look so sweet and her eyes so fair,
And her graceful step, and her angel air,
And the eagle plume in her dark brown hair.'

You know you were christened 'Gyneth,' because of my liking for this heroine of Sir Walter's, don't you?"

"I think grandmamma once told me so, but, dear Mamma, do you mind my saying that I don't much admire my namesake. I think she was very

vain and cruel, for all her sweet looks ; and I cannot forgive Sir Walter Scott, for having made King Arthur, ‘the stainless king,’ so bad.”

“ Ah, I almost forget the story now, but I remember thinking the poetry very graceful and pretty. I was always so very fond of painting and music, and poetry, and all that sort of thing, and —by-the-by, that reminds me, I wish you would play me some of your pieces, dear, that was a very beautiful air of Beethoven’s you played last night, but papa doesn’t much care for that style of music, he likes Italian airs, or something lively, a march, or a galoppe, for instance.”

“ I should have thought papa would have liked scientific music best,” said Gyneth, in some surprise.

“ Yes, but it is not so ; grave people do not always like grave music, and, moreover, papa has not much musical ear, he likes a regular *tune* better than the subtle melody of Beethoven or Mendelssohn. Let me see what music you have.”

Gyneth brought her pieces, and ranged them in order on the table.

“ A selection from Bach’s ‘Passion-musik,’—ah ! I have been told that is very fine ; Beethoven’s ‘Mount of Olives,’—why, this is nearly all sacred music, except,—yes, I see there are some sonatas, and Mendelssohn’s ‘Lieder,’ and so on ; all very beautiful, but not likely to be much appreciated in ordinary society. Who chose your music for you ?”

“ My music-master, who is the organist at the Cathedral, chose a good deal of it. Then those pieces of Mozart’s were grandmamma’s, and I learned them because she liked them ; and Lewis brought me a good many things, all that music of Bach’s, for instance, he had heard it in London, and thought it so beautiful.”

"And what do you like best yourself, my love?"

"Oh, I scarcely know, it is all so glorious! but only an orchestra could do justice to some of it, and I cannot even make it what it might be made on the piano. Lewis says I mangle some of the most exquisite parts."

"And I suppose you think a great deal of his opinion." Mrs. Deshon spoke rather mischievously, but the great grave eyes that were fronting hers, did not droop.

"He has very good taste in music," Gyneth replied, "and has heard all the best performers, so of course his opinion is worth having."

"And you are not offended at its unflattering nature?"

The eyes became luminous with mirthful wonder.

"Offended at the truth! Mamma, do you really think I could be so silly? Why criticisms help one so much."

"What a dear little oddity it is!" thought Mrs. Deshon; aloud, she only said, "I think your cousin must be rather a harsh critic, you seemed to me last night to play remarkably well. I wish you would let me hear some of these pieces now."

"Willingly," and Gyneth moved to the piano, selecting Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March,' as being almost the liveliest piece in her possession. Certainly she did not mangle that, her touch was at once clear and firm, her style both tasteful and spirited, it was rather hard that her reward should be, "Thank you, dear child, you really play wonderfully; what very correct time you keep; you would play dance-music well I am sure; I will get some waltzes for you to try."

"Do you wish me to learn that style of music then, mamma?" said Gyneth slowly.

"Yes, your papa likes it, and we must get some

opera airs, Anthony is very fond of them, he used to listen so intently while Jeannie and I played some airs from the 'Trovatore,' which we had arranged as a duet. I daresay you would play those almost at sight; I will go and look for them, and in the meantime just try over this galoppe, our bandmaster sent it me the other day, but it looks so difficult, I have not had courage to try it."

Gyneth took it, and turned obediently towards the piano, but after playing enough to satisfy herself that the difficulty was only in her mother's imagination, she left off, folded her arms on the music-stand, and leaned her head down on them.

Lambert's voice roused her, "I'm afraid you have a headache," he said in a tone of concern.

"No thank you; if it is anything it is the temper-ache, but I hope not quite that either. Mamma has left me this galoppe to learn, and she is going to get me some sets of waltzes, and so on; now I have an inveterate dislike to that sort of music."

"But that doesn't matter, does it? at least—I have made a very rude speech, but I mean in learning accomplishments one's great wish is to give pleasure to one's friends, and if papa and mamma like light gay music best, it is quite worth while for you to learn that, as well as the graver sort which you might yourself prefer."

"Worth while to spend one's time learning frivolous jig-tunes which have no real music in them, which can never do for us what good true music does—lift one's heart up, give one a feeling of aspiring, getting into a higher atmosphere where all is beautiful and harmonious!"

"Not many people feel that."

"But why don't they? How can they help feeling it?"

"I don't know, but as a fact many people prefer that inferior style of music which you despise, and

I am sure you would rather please others than yourself."

"But if they did not always content themselves with polkas and such things they would learn to like the higher kind of music in time."

"And you wish to put them through a course of training? But, Gyneth, wouldn't it be better to experiment on some one else than on papa and mamma?"

He spoke half playfully, but she divined his meaning. "You mean," she said, colouring, "that I ought to respect their tastes even if I cannot sympathize with them. Well, good-bye then to my own dear pieces," and she began collecting them together.

Her brother still lingered by her, once or twice opened his lips as if to speak and closed them again, but at length said abruptly, "It will not be good-bye to the 'higher atmosphere,' self-denial from a right motive brings one into the highest atmosphere of all."

"But it seems so hard to deny one's *best* tastes, and music, true music, seems one of God's most beautiful gifts to men, it refines one, does one good every way, and sacred music gives one as it were a new way of expressing praise to Him, sometimes almost more truly than one can do in words."

"But not more truly than in *deeds*, the sacrifice of self to Him, to what He has made our duty, must be the truest service we can render."

His tones were very low and almost sad, but the words seemed to come from his very heart.

"I see, only,—Lambert, did you ever care very much for art in any shape? music or painting or poetry? If you had, I don't think you would talk quite as you do."

"I scarcely know," he said hurriedly, "I think

I could have cared very much for all these once, but I feared—perhaps foolishly—that there was danger in them. So many in loving art think only of the human instrument, and forget from whom these wonderful powers come."

"Fra Angelico did not forget, nor Michael Angelo, nor Dante, nor Mendelssohn, no nor countless others. *I* believe that writing poetry, and composing music, and painting pictures in a religious spirit, is doing work for God in reality, though not perhaps so plainly as teaching ragged children, and making clothes for the poor. And those who spread abroad these noble paintings and poems, and who interpret to the best of their power this beautiful music, are doing something too, though of course much less; that is my theory."

Lambert seemed thoughtful. "I like it as a theory," he said presently, "and if we could always remember that the beautiful things which through men's souls are conveyed into their cunning hands, come from that Beauty which is above our souls, as S. Augustine says, I don't suppose there would be any danger to ourselves; but we must remember that it is not everybody who can feel that these things *are* beautiful, and I suppose we ought to beware of wasting our efforts in trying to make people appreciate the higher merits of art who have not the natural faculty for doing so, and really require something else from us."

"Want us to play them waltzes in short," said Gyneth.

"Yes, that perhaps among other things," he answered smiling, "grandmamma and Lewis liked to hear your more beautiful music; they understood it, and I daresay it did them good; *we* do not understand it, so you are going to do us good some other way I suppose."

"But, Lambert, I don't believe that *you* care for polkas."

"Did I ever say so? but Gyneth, have you constituted a new order of merit to consist exclusively of people who properly despise dance-music?"

She laughed good-humouredly, though at her own expense, and dashed suddenly into the opening bars of the galoppe, pausing however to say, "I give you fair warning that you are going to hear 'a very pretty thing indeed sung (or rather played) lamentably,' as Shakespeare has it, so you had better take instant refuge in flight."

"I must, though not for the reason you assign, for I only came up for a book for Fanny, and ought not to have stayed so long."

"Oh I wanted to ask if I could not help you; let me teach either Edgar or Fanny; it is not fair that you should have both."

"Well, we will settle about that by-and-by; at present you have your galoppe to occupy you. I have sent Katie to the nursery, and the others are very good."

He departed, and as Gyneth went on with her practice, she pondered much over him and his sayings. "What a strange boy he is," she thought. "I never saw or imagined any one like him, it is easy to see that he has lived at home nearly all his life, and taken his ideas from books, but how odd that he should be so ascetic; I don't think any of the others are so, and I am sure Lewis is not. I never heard of his having any other friend but Lewis; it must be from books that he has learned to think he ought to deny himself even innocent gratifications, as I am sure he does. Lewis would call that morbid, and perhaps it is rather, but I do admire Lambert's way of thinking always of other people, and making his own tastes and wishes of no consequence. If I could only be like that, in-

stead of so selfish and self-pleasing ! But oh I wish I knew what Lambert really cared for, that so I might be able to give him some enjoyment ; if he had said he cared for sacred music I would practise it when no one was by, and play it to him when we are alone together, but I never heard him say he cared for anything. I shall play my pieces over now and then, so as not absolutely to forget them, and some day I hope I shall have grand-mamma to play to again ; in the meantime I must learn what pleases papa and mamma ; how could I be so naughty as to complain ? I deserve that Lambert should think badly of me, as I daresay he does."

Unconsciously she was learning to hope for Lambert's good opinion, and she was beginning to wonder less that his very slightest expression of displeasure should grieve Edgar so much. She set much more happily to work at the dance-music, because he had represented her doing so as a duty, and took so kindly to the airs from the Trovatore, that she seemed to play them by intuition.

When the bell sounded for lunch, it found the mother and daughter in the midst of their duet, and Colonel Deshon coming in, stood listening, and beating time upon the mantel-piece, observing with a well-pleased air that Gyneth played even better than Jeannie. Anthony Waller joined them at luncheon, and when Mrs. Deshon proposed a drive into the country, asked permission to ride beside the carriage, that so he might 'enjoy their agreeable society.' Gyneth would gladly have dispensed with his attendance, but as her father and mother acquiesced, she could of course make no objection, so Anthony accompanied them, and rode from side to side, talking now to her and now to her mother, and presenting them with bouquets of hedge roses and wild honey-suckle, which had been gathered

under difficulties, as his fiery chesnut steed had a profound objection to standing still. He was in high spirits, and his manner was less affected than on the preceding evening, so Gyneth began to feel more kindly towards him, and they chatted together in cousinly fashion for the last half of the drive. But when they arrived at home, Gyneth's gaiety was damped by the sound of a crying voice, which she knew to be Edgar's, proceeding from the dining-room. She ran to him at once, and found him sitting on his papa's knee, apparently detailing some very mournful history, for his words were interrupted by sobs which he scarcely attempted to check, spite of Colonel Deshon's admonitory, "My dear boy, you really must stop crying, there is no need for all these tears."

"What is the matter, papa?" inquired Gyneth in dismay, "is Edgar hurt?"

"His cheek has been bruised by a stone, but Lambert has been bathing it, and it is better now; I think he is more frightened than hurt."

"Oh, it isn't that, papa," sobbed Edgar, "but Bertie says I am a coward, and I hate to be a coward, and I hate that Bertie should think me so."

"Well, never mind, you will show Bertie that you are not a coward by behaving very bravely next time you are hurt, won't you? I can't have you taken into the town any more though," he added *sotto voce*.

Gyneth was all anxiety to hear how the accident had happened, and from Edgar and her father together, she gradually learned that Lambert had taken Edgar with him to see Mr. Weatherhead the rector of the parish, that Mr. Weatherhead had taken them both to see an Industrial School for boys which he had lately established, and that while they were passing through a low back street which led to the school, some ragged children had

run after Edgar and the rector's little son, who were walking some way behind the two gentlemen, and had thrown stones at them.

"Lambert should have kept Edgar close to him," said Gyneth. Edgar hung his head, and presently came a sobbing admission, "Bertie told me to keep up with him, and waited for me once or twice, but Mr. Weatherhead walked so fast it tired me, so I got behind again."

"Then if you had done as you were told this wouldn't have happened, you see, Edgar," said Colonel Deshon, "was little Weatherhead hurt?"

"Yes, a stone grazed Horace's hand, and another made his lip bleed, but he only laughed, and Bertie said I ought to be ashamed to see how much braver he was than I."

"Bertie is harsh," thought Gyneth, but she had sense enough to refrain from even hinting so to Edgar, and a moment after Lambert himself came in.

"Well, are you better now, Eddie?" he inquired, cheerfully.

"Yes, I think it is no longer the outward wound that is the cause of grief," said Colonel Deshon, smiling, "but your forgiveness seems to be required, Lambert, to set matters right within. Edgar is very penitent for his want of bravery."

"I am myself the most to blame," said Lambert, "I ought to have looked better after him."

"Oh, nonsense, you couldn't be expected to run after him like a nursemaid, he ought to have kept close to you as you told him; but I think for the future you had better not take him into the town, at least not further than the High Street, there are plenty of good walks to be had without going near the town, which really is not a fit place for children. When anything takes you there you can leave him to go out with his sisters."

Lambert assented respectfully, but Edgar's face was piteous, and when Colonel Deshon left the room, thinking that he had benefited his little son by this judicious arrangement, there came a fresh burst of sobs even more bitter than before.

"Yes, I am very sorry, Eddie," said Lambert, compassionately, "but you must try to bear it well, and perhaps I may not need to go into the town very often."

"And when he does we can walk across the common with him, you know, Eddie," said Gyneth, "so you won't lose him for very long; don't cry so, my darling; do say you forgive him, Lambert."

"There is no need for formal pardons between brothers," said Lambert, with a look of amusement, "there has been too much tragedy already. Come, cheer up, Eddie, you are making Gyneth quite unhappy."

"Edgar, my pet," said Mrs. Deshon, putting her head in at the door, "the nursery tea is ready, and I want you to come with me to the store-room to fetch some honey and biscuits to make a treat for you and your sisters."

She took no notice of his downcast face as he approached her, but put her arm round him and led him away, talking gaily to him about some little plan for surprising the sisters, in which he was to be her assistant. She had heard from her husband that the poor child was in trouble, and had devised this way to cheer him, for she had as great a horror of "tragedy" as Lambert, and was very fertile in contrivances for turning tears into smiles.

Gyneth was not quite satisfied, and the glance she turned upon Lambert as she passed him was full of unconscious reproach.

"You think I have been cruel to Edgar," he said, still looking amused.

"I don't want to think so," she answered deprecatingly, "but it seems rather hard that he should have been scolded when he was hurt and frightened."

"*Did* anybody scold him?" inquired Lambert in surprise, "I thought papa was doing his best to comfort him, and all that I had said to him was that I was sorry he was such a coward in bearing pain, and that I wondered he was not ashamed to make so much fuss about his bruise, when Horace Weatherhead set him such an example of bravery."

"That 'all' was a good deal though to such a sensitive child as Edgar, and I think the reproach of cowardice is always a hard one to bear, don't you?"

"Yes, indeed, I know that by experience," said Lambert, crimsoning suddenly, and looking very much vexed with himself; "I was astonished that Edgar found a little pain so difficult to bear, and I'm afraid I spoke contemptuously, which I had no right to do; I ought to have remembered that it was only not my kind of cowardice."

"But, Lambert, I did not in the least mean to imply that," said Gyneth earnestly, "pray don't think so. I beg your pardon if I have seemed to find fault."

"You were perfectly right, and I am much obliged to you," he replied, rather coldly though; "I am not sure still, that Edgar did not deserve the reproof, but I was not the person who should have given it."

He was so determined on self-blame that Gyneth could only reiterate her apologies, and hurry away. Decidedly she never could love Lambert as she did her other brothers and sisters, and she should never be able to get on with him, never! very likely it was her own fault, she was quite

ready to admit that, but she really didn't know how to manage better.

She came down to dinner looking rather sad and weary, but soon got interested in a discussion, which was going on between her father and brother about the education of the people, and of soldiers in particular.

"In this place where so many low temptations surround the men, we must be doubly careful to try and raise their minds, and give them an interest in better things," said Colonel Deshon. "I must make out a list of new books for the regimental library, perhaps you can help me to some, Lambert? Parry's brother-in-law, who is staying with him, has very kindly offered to give a lecture to the men on General Havelock's life and character, but I have not quite consented to his doing so, I am afraid it would be after the usual pattern of platform oratory, the real subject almost smothered beneath the amount of morality pinned to it."

"And the most inapposite texts quoted perpetually throughout," said Mrs. Deshon, "at least if Mrs. Parry's brother is anything like Mrs. Parry herself. Pray don't consent to it, Edgar."

But Colonel Deshon was looking towards Lambert, who, however, said nothing.

"Have you ever had lectures for the soldiers before, papa?" inquired Gyneth.

"Once or twice in Corfu, and they answered very well, but everything depends upon the lecturer. What do you think the little Contessa has proposed? That we should have concerts, at which some of the men should sing, the band of course doing the instrumental part. I was quite beset in the messroom this morning with Parry on the one side proposing the lecture, and Ross on the other urging his wife's idea of the concerts; how-

ever, I contrived to escape without giving a definite answer to either."

Here was a charming opportunity for Gyneth to propound her ideas concerning the elevating influences of music, but she was too shy to take advantage of it, and only said, "Do you mean to say yes to the concerts, papa?"

"I must think about it, and hear exactly what Mrs. Ross's plan is. She is coming to call upon you, Gyneth, her husband told me."

"We must get her to sing her 'Song of Liberty' to Gyneth," said Lambert, "I believe Italian bravuras are considered her forte, but she puts all her heart in her national songs."

"She is *the* Contessa, Jeannie's friend, is she not?" asked Gyneth.

"Yes, only now transformed into Mrs. Alban Ross," replied Mrs. Deshon; "she is the most fascinating little creature possible, we are quite glad to have her in the regiment."

"I didn't know she had received a commission, Fanny," observed the colonel, with just the slightest, sweetest glimmer of mischief round his grave mouth.

And Mrs. Deshon, with a laugh at her own inaccuracy, glanced fondly up at him, saying, "I am sure some wives are more military than their husbands, no one would suppose you to be an officer, whereas I am unmistakeably an officer's wife."

"Well, I thought I had been very regimental to-night, my dear," rejoined the husband, twirling his moustache with rather an injured air, whereat the wife laughed again, a light musical laugh, that might have been a child's for merriment.

The children came into the drawing-room after dinner, but Edgar soon deserted the ladies, and joined his father and brother, who were sitting out on the lawn. Gyneth could see him from the

window, seated between the two gentlemen, and looking as happy as possible; perhaps then Lambert had not made him so miserable as she had fancied, after all, the tears might have been half from mere fright; she began to think she had made a mistake in accusing Lambert of cruelty.

For surely she ought not to have let her tenderness for one brother make her unjust towards the other.





CHAPTER VII.

“How-do-you-do? and how-do-you-do?
And how-do-you-do again?”
Nursery Rhymes.



YNETH was industriously practising some airs from the “Sonnambula” one afternoon, a few days after her arrival at home, when the servant announced “Mr. and Mrs. Parry,” and there entered a tall young man, who rather resembled an overgrown boy, and a very short lady, who was manifestly some years older. The husband looked ingenuous and amiable, but preter-naturally solemn; the wife on the contrary seemed in a perpetual state of giggle, but she also looked amiable, and greeted Gyneth with great warmth and friendliness.

“I am afraid we have interrupted you,” said Mr. Parry, gravely, glancing at the open piano.

The fact was so obvious, that Gyneth only smiled, and said it was of no consequence, she could finish her practice some other time.

“I suppose you are very fond of music,” continued the young officer, “are you one of the advocates for the scheme of a regimental concert?”

“I think it would be very pleasant if it could be managed, and papa seems to think it would be a good thing for the soldiers.”

"Yes, I know the colonel thinks so, but for my part I don't see it, I don't believe any amount of fiddle-de-deeing will keep up a good tone among the men, nothing but religion can do that."

Mrs. Parry looked approvingly at her husband, and giggled; Gyneth not knowing what to say, said nothing.

"I am sorry my brother-in-law was obliged to leave us without having given that lecture on Havelock," Mr. Parry went on, "he is just the man to turn such a subject to good account, but unfortunately he could only stay with us till yesterday, and the Colonel didn't seem to like the idea of getting it all up in a hurry, else I daresay we might have managed it."

"Papa was much obliged to your brother for his kindness in offering to lecture," said Gyneth, politely.

"Oh, he would have been only too happy, he never likes to lose an opportunity for usefulness, and he quite pities our poor soldiers exposed to the temptations of such a place as this. For as I suppose you know, Miss Deshon," continued Mr. Parry, with additional solemnity, "Harbourmouth is a terribly bad place, in fact in some respects there couldn't be a worse."

"So I have heard," replied Gyneth, "I am so sorry."

"And a place where very little is done to counteract the evil," said Mrs. Parry, as cheerfully as if she were announcing some decidedly agreeable fact, "there is no young men's association, and there were no mother's meetings till dear Mrs. Gordon established one lately, and the schools are not at all so numerous as they ought to be."

"Isn't there some lady—a Miss Boyd, I think, —who does a good deal among the poor?" inquired Gyneth, "and has she not lately set up

some industrial schools? my brother Lambert was telling me about them."

"Ah," said Mr. Parry, shaking his head, "she doesn't go the right way to work; she's got a schoolroom hung round with absurd Pre-Raphaelite pictures, and illuminated texts in Gothic letters that the children can't read."

"Oh, but surely almost anyone who can read common print can make out the meaning of Gothic letters, and where there is a teacher to explain, the children cannot be puzzled for long. My brother said they all seemed so happy, and that so many useful things were taught them."

"Ah, I see you are one of that school," said Mr. Parry, regretfully.

Gyneth marvelled for a minute whether he meant the Industrial School, but concluded that he must rather have intended to refer to the school of opinions of which Pre-Raphaelite pictures and Gothic scrolls are presumed to be the sign.

"I suppose you hold the same views as your brother," said Mrs. Parry, with an appearance of great amusement, and as Gyneth looked at her in silent wonder, she added, "Charlie and I do so regret that such a good young man as he is should be so far on the road to Rome."

Did Mrs. Parry imagine that Lambert was at present journeying in Italy? or was she speaking figuratively? Gyneth thought it must be the latter, but fervently wished that Mr. and Mrs. Parry would not talk in riddles, and felt a growing inclination to laugh, which politeness obliged her to repress.

"I wonder if the servant has told my brother that you are here," she said, waiving the question of his supposed Romish tendencies, "he is the only one at home except myself, papa and mamma are out riding, and the children are taking a walk with their nurse."

"Little dears!" exclaimed Mrs. Parry, and she began a series of inquiries after their health, which lasted till Lambert appeared.

There was more cordiality in the greeting between the Parrys and her brother than Gyneth had expected to see, and in talking about Cambridge, and Corfu reminiscences, the conversation flowed on pleasantly, and there were no more mysterious references to Rome. But when Mr. Parry rose to take leave he said rather reproachfully to Lambert, "I didn't see you at Mr. Gordon's on Sunday."

"S. Olave's? no, we have seats at the parish church," Lambert replied.

"But I hope you will come and hear Mr. Gordon some evening," said Mrs. Parry, "we can always make room for you in our pew."

"Thank you," said Lambert, and courteous as was the tone, there needed not any prefix of 'no' to make the short reply appear a decided negative.

Mrs. Parry turned to Gyneth. "Perhaps *you* would like to hear Mr. Gordon, Miss Deshon, we shall be so happy to take you with us any time you like to go, and I shall hope too to interest you in Mr. Gordon's schools; he has put me on the committee, and I and the other ladies are very busy just now, as are also the children, in making all sorts of little things which when they are finished are to be sent out to Mr. Gordon's brother, who is a missionary in India. Some kind friends have contributed materials, and others are giving us their time; we are glad of all the assistance we can get, for a dear friend of Mr. Gordon's is going out to India in about a week, and has offered to take charge of our parcel if we can get it ready before then."

One of those troublesome absurd remembrances of droll things heard or read which *will* come across

one's mind even when least desired, made Gyneth smile, and hope inwardly that the "little things" did not include any of the "moral pocket-handkerchers" so amusingly described in "Pickwick;" but the smile was followed by a feeling of compunction, which made her offer her help in the manufacture of some of the little garments. Mrs. Parry caught at the proposition with abundant thanks, and innumerable giggles, and inquired whether she should call for Gyneth the next day and take her to join the working party at Mrs. Gordon's, where all was "so nice and sociable," or whether she would prefer having some work sent to her to do at home. Gyneth much preferred the latter, so with a promise to send her two or three articles that very same day, Mrs. Parry and her husband took their departure.

"What funny people," said Gyneth, when they were gone.

"Funny? yes, they are rather funny," replied Lambert, absently. "Gyneth, do you really like making things?"

"Do you mean little clothes like those Mrs. Parry is going to send me? yes, if they are for any good purpose, I don't like purposeless work much."

"Ah, I observed that you were not given to crochet, but I thought perhaps you were like Fanny who detests any sort of work."

"No, indeed, grandmamma has instilled into me a proper veneration for the needle. Can I do anything for you, Lambert? Do you want any glove-buttons sewn on?"

"No, oh no, nothing of the sort, thank you, I was only thinking—"

"Well," said Gyneth, expectantly: but he still hesitated, and at length she exclaimed, "Oh, Lambert, do please say what you mean."

"I know I am very stupid," he answered, apolo-

getically ; "but I do so hate interfering, only I was thinking that as you are so anxious to be of use I hoped you would not forget that Mr. Weatherhead has the first claim on us. Mr. Gordon has a district church at one end of the town and is very popular, and many people, like the Parrys, join heart and soul in his schemes, and ignore the rector completely, but I don't think you would wish to be drawn into doing that."

"Oh, of course not ; but how can such a thing happen?"

"Partly, I think,—so far as the ladies are concerned,—because Mr. Weatherhead's wife is dead, and his daughter not yet old enough to take the lead in anything, while Mrs. Gordon I am told is an active managing person who takes pains to get people on her committee, and so on."

"And gives 'sociable' working parties to encourage them. Ah, well, Mrs. Parry's work will not take me long, and meantime I must make Miss Weatherhead's acquaintance, and see if I can do anything to help *her*. Only you know I am so useless, not old enough to take a district, or anything like that, and needlework is a little stupid thing that anybody can do."

There was a quiver in her voice as she finished speaking, which made Lambert look at her anxiously and say, "It is something that you are willing to do all that you can."

"Oh, I hope I am that ; I will do whatever Mr. Weatherhead thinks I can, provided mamma does not mind ; but oh, it is so grievous that the place should be so bad, and that we can do so little for it ! The evil and the misery of the world seem to press upon one so heavily when one is doing nothing on the side of goodness and mercy."

Her voice had steadied itself, and no tears fell, but such deep honest grief burned in her eyes, that

Lambert saw the feeling she had just expressed was no mere evanescent piece of girlish sentiment, but one strongly rooted in her heart. What should he say? Should he remind her that her time for action would come, that she was but in training for it now, and must not reproach herself with the non-fulfilment of duties which God's providence had not appointed for her? No; that sounded like implied fault-finding. Should he tell her how truly he sympathised with her, how deeply he felt his own inability to do anything to stem the tide of sin and misery in the world? No, that was speaking of himself, bringing his own feelings forward, as if *they* could signify! Should he remind her that goodness and mercy might be shown forth in the hidden home life, that she living quietly, performing the duties of a good daughter and good sister, was thus doing her part on the side of right, and was shedding forth a pure influence which might reach further than she thought of? No; that seemed like setting up to teach her, and in his humility he thought himself unfit to do that. Meantime, poor boy, he looked nervous, and said nothing, and Gyneth swallowing down her emotion went back to the "Sonnambula."

But as he was leaving the room she turned round again, saying, "Lambert, I wish you would tell me what to think of the Parrys, they are very kind-hearted good sort of people, are they not?"

"Yes, indeed, and they are truly benevolent people, for though they are not at all rich they contrive to do more than many who are, by self-denial, and willingness to take trouble."

"Then one ought quite to admire them? But surely they have very strange opinions, Mrs. Parry said she thought you were on the road to Rome."

"Yes, that is one of her fancies. I believe some relatives of hers whom she used to be much with

before her marriage were almost dissenters, and she imbibed from them some mistaken one-sided notions. Her husband was brought up in good Church principles, but when he was very young—he is only six-and-twenty now—he was extremely thoughtless, and as it was from her that he first learned to think seriously he allows himself to be guided by her opinion."

" You don't think I need be intimate with them, do you? Mrs. Parry seemed anxious to be sociable, but I fancy mamma does not quite like them, does she?"

" Not quite, and I'm sure she will not wish you to be very intimate with them, so the question is settled for you."

" I am glad of it, for it is uncomfortable to be much with people whose opinion one is compelled to distrust, and moreover I really have no wish to see much of them, the giggling and the solemnity are both too distasteful to me."

" That is mere manner," said Lambert, rather coldly, " Parry used to be very merry once, but learned to be afraid of his own high spirits, and so took up that solemn way of speaking; Mrs. Parry's giggling proceeds, I believe, from nervousness."

" But the contrast is so absurd! Yes, I see you think me very naughty, Lambert, and if they are really good, I ought not to laugh at them, but I do so dislike a bad manner, it does jar upon me so."

" I am sorry," said Lambert colouring, and he went away.

Gyneth's fingers made melody with " Ah non giunge," but her mind was perplexed and regretful; she felt afraid that her brother had taken her thoughtless remark home, and longed to run after him, and tell him that she had been thinking of the Parrys only, and that she already repented of

having criticised them. But while she was hesitating whether to do so or not, she heard the house-door close, and going to the window saw Lambert run down the steps, and take the road towards the sea. "So we are not to make it up this time, Bertie," she said to herself as she watched him, "I wonder if we shall ever understand one another quite, or whether I shall always go on blundering and vexing you when I least mean it; if you were not so very, *very* timid and hesitating, and would speak freely to me, I should like it much better. And to think that I once fancied you dictatorial! I could almost wish you were!"

She went back to the piano, but was fated not to get on with her practising that afternoon, for she had scarcely seated herself before the door was opened, and the servant ushered in "Captain and Mrs. Alban Ross."

If Gyneth's sensitiveness had been offended by the Parrys' uncomfortable manners, it was soothed and fascinated now by the graceful ease of the young Ionian lady. She was slight and rather small, with lovely dark eyes, regular features, black hair, and a complexion which without being exactly fair, was clear and bright; her soft foreign-sounding English was very sweet and musical, and her manner a pretty mixture of simplicity and archness. Her husband, a great, big, blue-eyed Saxon, followed her with his looks, and hung upon her words, seeming to regard his own existence as of quite secondary importance. He was an only son, the heir to a fine property, idolized by his parents and sisters, and a general favourite, but he was one of those people whom prosperity does not spoil, and had never known what it was to feel pride in himself, or in anything belonging to him, except in his beautiful young bride, whom he re-

garded as a being of a superior order. He had not much attention to spare for other women beyond the requisite courtesies of society, and after a cordial "How-d'ye-do?" and an inquiry for "the Colonel," left the conversation to his wife, who on the strength of being Jeannie's great friend, claimed immediate intimacy with Gyneth, and said in her pretty foreign way, "We must not begin to talk like strangers, with little speeches about the weather, 'what a fine day,' and all that. You must tell me of my dear Jeannie, and of yourself; how is the dear grandmamma? and the good cousin that you used to write of? Ah, I have seen many of your letters: Jeannie used to show them to me; was that very naughty?"

Gyneth's English shyness and reserve would not admit of as much cordiality in return, but she replied smiling, that her grandmamma and her cousin were, she believed, quite well, and that her mother had just had a letter from Jeannie, who was at Paris, and enjoying herself very much.

"Ah, the darling! and when is she coming to England?"

"She does not know exactly; Mr. Hutchinson talks of taking her through Switzerland first, but their plans are not quite settled."

"And 'Murray's Handbook' has not proved fatal yet? Ah but it is in Switzerland that she will have the greatest dose of it; she must not think of your Byron, and his 'Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains;' it will be 'Mont Blanc is so many feet high, and Professor Somebody ascended it in such a year, and Mr. Somebody-else in such another.' I can fancy it all so well."

"Is Mr. Hutchinson so devoted to 'Murray' then?"

"To be sure; ah, and so are all the English gentlemen. I do not wonder that the poor French-

man asked if those red books were not the English people's Prayer Books, or that another began his description of an Englishman with 'il porte dans sa main un petit livre rouge,' this husband of mine had a long row of Murrays, 'Handbook of Switzerland,' 'Belgium and the Rhine,' all so correct, he thought it would be so nice when we travelled together, but one day I was very cold, and I made a great fire of them; they did not even burn nicely though, they only made a great smoke."

"Of course," said the husband, who apparently keenly relished his little wife's mischief, "did you ever hear of such a silly little lady, Miss Deshon? Your sister will, I have no doubt, go through her course of Murray most dutifully, and never dream of making a bonfire of her husband's property."

"Ah yes, Jeannie is so good, she just opens her pretty eyes when she is told to admire this or that; she would never think of raising a revolt. Are you like that too, Miss Deshon, or are you perverse like me?"

"I am not fond of being told what to admire certainly," said Gyneth, "though I am willing to own that my taste requires education."

"Ah, native taste is the best; I do not mean to let any one educate mine. I shall say that the 'Venus de Medici' is ugly if I think so, even if I am to be hooted out of good society for my boldness."

"You little barbarian!" exclaimed Captain Ross in pretended horror, "it is quite painful to have such shocks to one's respectable prejudice, I shall be afraid to take you among 'proper' people."

"Oh but you must, they are so funny. And now tell me, Miss Deshon, how is your brother? that good Lambert whom Jeannie and I used

to torment so with our nonsense. How does he like Cambridge? Has he made any friends there?"

"Not any special friend, I think, but he likes college very well. I am sorry he is not at home, he only went out a few minutes before you came."

"Ah, he must come and see me, and you will come too, I hope; do not make a formal visit, but come to lunch, both of you; I want to consult you about the concert, Colonel Deshon tells me you are musical."

Gyneth answered readily that she was fond of music, and this gave rise to a discussion which lasted for the remainder of the visit, but when Mrs. Alban Ross took leave, she again pressed Gyneth to lunch with her, saying, "I want to be very good friends with you, if you will let me. I think we are nearly of the same age; Jeannie is two whole years older than me, but you are not more than eighteen, are you?"

"No, I am not quite eighteen yet; my birthday is in August."

"And I was eighteen in January, so I am the eldest, but there is not much difference; promise me to come and see me soon."

"Thank you, I shall like to come very much, and you will sing to me, will you not? Lambert is so anxious that I should hear some of your patriotic songs."

"Ah, even he cannot resist my songs of liberty," said the young Greek, her eyes flashing suddenly, "I do not like singing them in ordinary society, among those who do not care for my people, but I will sing them to you."

"Pray bring your brother with you, Miss Deshon," said Captain Ross, as he shook hands, "we are always glad to see him, and he is almost too

much of a hermit ; don't you think so ? He never seems to care to stir from home."

" It is very pleasant for us to have so much of his company," answered Gyneth, with a glad proud smile. Blame Bertie as she might sometimes in her secret thoughts, she was ready to defend him against all the world.





CHAPTER VIII.

"Not as although we thought we could do much
Or claimed large sphere of action for ourselves ;
Not in this thought—since rather be it ours,
Both thine and mine, to ask for that calm frame
Of spirit, in which we know and deeply feel
How little we can do, and yet do that."

TRENCH.

WHEN Mrs. Deshon and her daughters were sitting in the drawing-room after dinner, that same evening, the servant brought in a parcel, 'For Miss Deshon, with Mrs. Parry's compliments,' which, when opened, was found to contain divers little garments, of various shapes and sizes.

"So you have allowed Mrs. Parry to enlist you in her service already," exclaimed Mrs. Deshon, laughing, "my dear child, you don't know what you are bringing on yourself."

"Do you mind my making these little things, mamma?" said Gyneth; "I would not have offered if I had thought you would have any objection."

"Oh, I have no sort of objection, if you like to be so self-sacrificing ; but here, let me help you, I can make this frock-body while you are making the skirt ; or you might let Fanny run the seams

for you ; it would do her good to have some work, she has not done any for an age."

"I've lost my thimble, mamma," objected Fanny, who was studying the use of Lambert's compasses, and had already covered a whole sheet of paper with innumerable circles, triangles, and hexagons, all more or less misshapen.

"But I found it, and here it is. Come, my love, I am sure you will like to help Gyneth."

"Oh, mamma, if is only on my account,—" began Gyneth, but then stopped, feeling that it was no kindness to Fanny to aid her in evading attention to her mother's wishes.

A struggle was apparently going on in the little girl's mind, for she grew very red, and kept balancing the compasses up and down on her fingers ; finally she put them back into their case, and holding out her hand for the work, exclaimed brusquely, "I'll do it."

"Oh, thank you, Fan," said Gyneth, warmly, making room for her beside her ; but when she observed poor Fan's big stitches, and tendency to 'pucker,' she perceived that her assistance was not likely to be altogether a benefit. "Never mind, if she does it badly, I can unpick it and do it again without saying anything," was her mental reflection, and so she quietly pursued her own work, the exquisite neatness of which might well have served as a model for the awkward little sister.

"I rather pitied you when I heard that the Parrys had called," said Mrs. Deshon presently. "I suppose they had a great deal to say about 'dear Mr. Gordon,' he is their last new paragon."

"Mrs. Parry asked me to come and see his schools, and offered me a seat in her pew at S. Olave's. I suppose they live in that part of the parish, don't they?"

"No, they are not in Mr. Gordon's district at all; but they like him, and therefore attend his church; they tried to persuade us to do so, but that is not your father's way."

"Lambert was talking about Mr. Weatherhead this afternoon," said Gyneth: "he says that he has very few helpers, and that Miss Weatherhead is too young to be able to do very much. I am afraid *I* am too young to be of any use, but if I could help in ever so small a way it would be better than nothing. Would you mind my taking a class in the Sunday-school, if they are in want of teachers, and Mr. Weatherhead thinks I am fit for it?"

The inquiry was made very timidly, for Gyneth doubted her own fitness for a teacher, and feared the proposal might seem presumptuous, but that was not the light in which the matter appeared to Mrs. Deshon.

"My dear, it is very good of you, I am sure," she said affectionately, "and I daresay you would teach very nicely, but I must ask papa about it. The Sunday-school is in the town, close to the Church, and I am not sure that it is a fit place for you to go to, though now I think of it, Bertie has promised to take a class there, I believe, and while he is at home you would have his protection to and fro."

"Has Lambert undertaken a class already?" asked Gyneth in surprise, "he never told me so."

"I should think not!" exclaimed Fanny, who was listening eagerly, and making worse puckers in her work than ever.

"Fan means," said Mrs. Deshon, "that it is not Lambert's way to call attention to any of his own doings, but last Sunday (the day after he arrived from Cambridge) papa introduced him to Mr. Weatherhead, who joined us on our way home

from Church, and something was said of teachers being wanted for the Sunday-school, whereupon it was soon arranged that Lambert should take a class of boys during his vacation. He went to get some instructions about it the day that poor Edgar met with the accident to his cheek."

"And cried like a baby about it," interrupted Fanny, scornfully.

"Fan!" said Mrs. Deshon, in a tone of gentle displeasure, and the little girl looked down ashamed, but presently observed in a sort of aside, "I know *Bertie* thought Eddie was cowardly."

"Have you seen Miss Weatherhead yet, mamma?" said Gyneth.

"Yes, I made the acquaintance of a host of little Weatherheads one afternoon, and the oldest, I was assured, was quite her father's right hand. She seemed rather a forward little demoiselle, and talked more like a woman of thirty than a girl of fifteen; but, poor child, from having lost her mother, she has been made old before her time. She has, I think, eight brothers and sisters; the youngest only three years old; I quite pity poor Mr. Weatherhead, left with the care of all those little ones, delicate children, they are, too, I am told."

"And his is a very large parish, is it not?"

"Yes, and a very poor one; I am sure I wish we could afford to help him in his various charities, but really we have no superabundant wealth, and military people have so many expenses. Papa has given him a subscription for the schools, and the District Visiting Society; but I scarcely know what more we can do, for we must keep up the regimental charities, and the poor soldiers' wives come to me for assistance continually; there was a poor woman here only this morning with a long pitiful story, and of course I could not send her away unrelieved."

"Oh, no," said Gyneth, in thorough acquiescence, and Mrs. Deshon continued, "Some people make their home and their children uncomfortable that they may give to the poor, but I can't bear that system; it would be all very well if only oneself was sacrificed, but I couldn't endure to let papa go without the comforts he requires, or to deny my children anything."

"But we ought to be willing to be denied sometimes, mamma," said Gyneth; "I hope you won't mind refusing me if I should ask for anything extravagant."

"I don't believe you will, my dear, and pray don't go into the other extreme, like that ridiculous child Edgar, who, when I offered to buy him one of those pretty little images that he admired so much yesterday, declared he would rather not have it, and nearly cried when I pressed it on him, though I could see all the time he was longing for it."

"Do you know, mamma," interrupted Fanny, "Katie has broken the one you bought for her; she broke its head right off yesterday evening."

"Quel dommage!" exclaimed Mrs. Deshon lightly, but she by no means drew any of the moral reflections from the incident that it seemed calculated to suggest. She was really not at all extravagant as regarded herself, but always lavish where her children were concerned, and it was a good and tender feeling which made her averse to stinting them in any of their pleasures. But perhaps a wiser love, while it did not impose sacrifices on them, would yet have trained them to a participation in that glad and willing spirit of self-denial, which, when it pervades a family, makes each vie with the other in foregoing mere luxuries for the sake of charity, and which does in truth produce more real pleasure than can be produced by the

most studious gratification of each one's tastes and fancies.

"Let me see how you are getting on with your hemming, Fan," said Mrs. Deshon, after a few minutes' silence. "Oh, what big stitches! Bertie," —to Lambert, who had just entered the room,— "don't you think a course of needlework would be quite as useful as Euclid?"

"More so, if you mean for Fanny: you should see what a clever worker little Miss Weatherhead is, Fan."

"I don't care about Miss Weatherhead," replied Fanny, in high disdain, "mamma says she's forward."

"Those that live in glass houses"—quoted Mrs. Deshon mischievously—"you know what follows, Fanny."

Fanny turned with a discomfited air towards Lambert, but soon recovered herself, and went on with her hemming. She took the little skirt away with her when she went to bed, and did not return it to her sister until the next afternoon, when Gyneth found to her surprise that all the gobble-stitches had vanished, and in their stead was a row of perfectly small and smooth though rather irregular stitches.

"Thank you, dear Fan; why this looks much better than it did last night," she remarked wond eringly. "Who has made the improvement?"

"Bertie," began Fanny, but was interrupted by Gyneth's laughter.

"My dear Fan, I know he can do a great many useful things, but I really hope he doesn't work!"

"No, no, of course not," replied Fan impatiently, "but I showed him the frock when I had finished it, and he said it was much too bad, and wouldn't be of any use to you, so I unpicked it and did it all over again."

"That was very good of you ; but when did you find time ? I thought you were at your lessons."

"I did it instead of Euclid," was the rather dolorous reply.

"Oh, I am sorry," said the tender-hearted sister ; but Fanny brightened again, and said smiling, "How funny you are, Gyneth ! Don't you see it served me right for not taking pains yesterday evening ? Bertie said very likely *you* would let me off the unpicking, but that I had no business to let myself off, so I wouldn't ask you whether I should do it or not."

"Bertie is wiser than I," said Gyneth, "though I know I have felt in my own case that if one has done anything negligently it is better to punish oneself by doing it over again, where that is possible, however troublesome it may be. But no one else ever enforced this on me ; dear grandmamma was so indulgent that she could not bear me to suffer for my faults."

"How grandmamma and you must have spoiled Edgar. He can't bear to have a word said to him now, and when Bertie turned him back in his lessons this morning he began to cry."

"He generally did his lessons very well with me ; perhaps Lambert gives him harder ones."

"Oh, no, awfully easy ones, little bits of things that I could do in ten minutes, and he is so dreadfully slow over them, and Bertie is so patient, it quite fidgets me to hear them going over the same things again and again. I don't think Eddie is at all clever, do you, Gyneth ?"

"Not very, certainly ; but he can't help that, you know, Fan ; it would be cruel to be impatient with him for what is not a fault."

Fanny glanced at the difficult German book in Gyneth's hand, then at her sister's face.

"Gyneth, I do think Bertie is right when he says you are very good, for if you who are so

clever, are not made cross by people who are stupid, you must be good, I'm *quite* sure."

Even Edgar when assured of Bertie's approval could scarcely have looked more joyous than did Gyneth at that moment, but the bright expression died away directly. "Lambert would not think me good if he really knew me," she said to herself, "and I ought not to like that he should think me so even for a minute: grandmamma has always thought so, and will not be persuaded to the contrary, and Rose is just as partial, there is no one but Lewis who really knows my faults, and cares for me in spite of them."

There was a veiled sadness in her tone as she answered playfully, "Neither Bertie nor any of you quite know me yet, Fanny; by-and-by you will find out how cross and disagreeable I can be." But her lips soon parted in a smile again, and the thought that had brought it back was this—"If everyone else should find out how anything but good I am, and should learn to dislike me, I should still have Lewis; for he knows most of my naughtiness already, and yet,—likes me."

She pondered over what Fanny had said of Edgar's slowness at his lessons, and decided on again offering her services in teaching him. Lambert made no objection, but Edgar did, and at length a compromise was effected, and it was arranged that Lambert should continue to teach both Edgar and Fanny Latin and Arithmetic, while Gyneth should superintend the rest of their lessons. She did not find Edgar so docile as he had been used to be; Fanny's presence distracted him, and he was impatient to get away that he might go to Lambert. Fan was the best pupil, for she was wonderfully quick and clever, and so delighted at finding how much Gyneth knew that she was in the best of spirits and humours.

The next day was Sunday, and Gyneth saw Mr. Weatherhead for the first time, at Church, and afterwards met him when she was walking home with Lambert, and was introduced both to him and his daughter.

On Monday as she was strolling on the beach with Edgar, a boyish shout made them turn round, and Horace Weatherhead came dashing up to them. "Papa has gone to see the coastguard man who lives up there," he said, pointing to a quaint little house that was perched on a high ridge of ground overlooking the beach, "He's very ill, poor man, so I mustn't go in to disturb him, and I'm waiting till papa comes out."

He was a pleasant-looking little boy with a round freckled face, a high colour, and dark hair and eyes. Gyneth invited him to have a game with Edgar, and sat down, herself, promising to keep watch on the coastguard man's house, and call him when his papa came out.

Horace proposed that they should play at being mermen, and decorated Edgar and himself with fantastically-arranged pieces of seaweed, after which the game consisted principally in throwing stones into the sea, as signals to the mermaids who were supposed to be very disconsolate at their sudden disappearance from the depths of the ocean.

Gyneth suggested that Hans Andersen's venerable mermaid who insisted on her little granddaughter's having a row of oysters appended to her tail as a badge of dignity, was doubtless one of their relations; and Horace replied solemnly that she was their great-aunt. He invented a whole genealogy, in which Edgar acquiesced, not without a little air of condescension however, as if humouring his friend's nonsense, rather than entering heartily into it. Gyneth was perhaps the most

amused, and was rather sorry when she descried a black figure descending the precipitous pathway which led from the coastguard's dwelling to the beach, and was obliged to announce to Horace that his father was in sight.

The child hastily divested himself of his seaweed adornments, and ran to meet him, but apparently had not had enough of Edgar's society, for he brought Mr. Weatherhead down to where Gyneth and her brother were seated, exclaiming, "There, papa, there's my brother-merman, do let's walk along the beach, and then we can send some more messages to the mermaids."

Mr. Weatherhead smiled consent, shook hands with Gyneth, and inquired after Edgar's bruised cheek. The bruise was still plainly to be seen, but Eddie pronounced it quite well, and grew rosy with shame at the remembrance of the tears which the rector had seen him shed for it; he was glad to run on in front with Horace, and hide his confusion by pretending to look for mermaidens in the water.

"He seems rather delicate, poor little fellow," said Mr. Weatherhead to Gyneth, "but he is not so pale as my own little boy. I don't mean Horace," he continued, as she looked up in astonishment, "I mean one of my other sons, Geoffrey, who has very bad health, and is moreover blind."

An exclamation of sorrowful surprise escaped Gyneth, and Mr. Weatherhead went on, "You had not heard of him I daresay, he is away from home now, my sister has taken him with her to London to be under the care of an oculist."

"Then there is some hope of his recovering his sight?"

"Very little, I fear, but we must not neglect any chance, and under his aunt's care his health will be well attended to. My little daughter Au-

gusta almost wore herself out with nursing him last winter ; it is too great a charge for her."

"Your daughter has not gone away too, has she ? Mamma and I were planning to go and see her some day soon."

The clergyman's careworn face quite beamed with pleasure. "Augusta will be delighted," he said warmly, "poor child, she has not many visitors ; she is too young to be visited as a matter of course, and we have not many friends here."

"You have not been here very long, I think my brother told me ?"

"Not quite two years, and we came from a country parish, where my children were universally known—and spoilt, I'm afraid I must add. It was a great change for them coming here. And so it has been to you, I think,—you were living in a cathedral town before, were you not ?"

"Yes, at ——, and I was very sorry to leave it ; but I do not dislike what I have yet seen of Har-bourmouth."

"No, the common is pleasant enough, it is the town that is so disagreeable ; I am glad for my children's sake that my house is in the outskirts, though it would be more convenient to me to be nearer my church."

Gyneth made a remark about the apparent antiquity of the church, and some conversation on its architecture followed, during which they arrived at the point where a road led up from the beach to the outskirts of the town.

Gyneth was going to wish Mr. Weatherhead good-bye, and turn homewards across the common, when he stopped her by saying, "I am going straight home, would you like to come with me and see my little girl ? She has denied herself a walk to-day that she may finish some work she is busy with, so your visit will be particularly welcome."

Gyneth knew that her mother would be glad to be spared the visit to the "forward little demoiselle," and so readily accepted the Rector's proposition, only inquiring whether his house was really quite outside the town, on account of the prohibition concerning Edgar.

Augusta Weatherhead was in the drawing-room, very busily engaged in the construction of a child's sun-bonnet. She greeted Gyneth with womanly composure, inquired politely after Colonel and Mrs. Deshon, and seemed far more an adept at general conversation than her father. She was plain in face, but clever looking, and had a good figure, which together with her nicely-made dress and well-arranged hair gave her a stylish appearance unusual at her age. Gyneth felt herself quite awkward and childish in comparison with this precocious little lady, and meekly submitted to be patronised by her, feeling much less at ease with the Rector's daughter than with the rector himself.

Mr. Weatherhead left them in a few minutes, and then Augusta became less stately, and more communicative. She asked if Gyneth would excuse her going on with her work, as she was in a hurry to get it finished, and explained that it was for a child whom her father was interested in, and whose parents were going to sail for Australia in a day or two.

"Could I help you?" inquired Gyneth, shyly, almost feeling that the offer was useless.

"Oh, no, thank you, I shall be able to manage it; I can get through a great deal of work on the days I don't go out."

"And you seem to work so quickly; I wish I could."

Augusta smiled a superior smile, and observed, "I could do a great deal more if the children didn't

hinder me, but Horace and Nelly are so riotous I am obliged to be continually looking after them."

"We'd a great deal rather you didn't, Gussie," put in Horace, with a roguish look.

"Do you teach them their lessons?" asked Gy-neth.

"Oh, no, a daily-governess comes every morning to do that, and meanwhile I attend to house-keeping matters, and my German, and practising. I am anxious to keep up my music, for when I was staying in London with my aunt Clarissa last year, I had lessons from a first-rate master, and it would be a pity that those should be thrown away. Do you practise much, Miss Deshon?"

"An hour every day, nominally, but I am afraid I am not very exact about it. I play more or less as the humour takes me."

"An hour does not seem much; my master used to say one must practise at least two hours every day if one wished to attain any proficiency, and I think I even exceed that time, but then it is partly at the organ. I am very anxious to learn to play that well, that I may be able to be papa's organist; the one he has now is very expensive, and extremely troublesome, always wanting to play chants that he has composed himself."

"How soon do you think you shall be able to take his place? Are you not rather frightened at the idea of it?"

"Oh, I daresay I shall feel a little nervous for the first time or so, but I don't mean to make the attempt until I can play really well; and the organist is not seen at all in our church, so I shall have no stares to discompose me, and make me play wrong notes."

"I thought you didn't mind being stared at, Gussie," said Horace, "I'm sure you said so one day."

Little Miss Gussie's chin went up in the air.

"Of course I am not so silly as to mind people's rudeness," she replied, "but I would rather avoid it when possible. You shouldn't make such foolish remarks, Horace."

Horace smiled, and made a face at Edgar, but Eddie was lost in thought, and presently looked up, and said, "Wouldn't it be wrong to make wrong notes in Church?"

Augusta laughed, and Horace looked puzzled, but Gyneth comprehended and answered softly, "Not if one couldn't help it, Eddie, but of course one ought to be as careful as possible."

He seemed inclined to say something more, but checked himself, and stood silent by Gyneth's side, twining his little fingers round hers, and not turning again to the Chinese puzzles which Horace Weatherhead had spread out on the table for him.

Augusta was struck with his beauty, and also with the delicacy of his appearance, which seemed to arouse in her the same train of thought as it had in her father; for she too began to talk of poor blind little Geoffrey, and with a gentleness—it was not quite tenderness—which made her manner much pleasanter than it had been before.

Just as Gyneth was taking leave, the Rector came in with a tiny child—his youngest—perched on his shoulder. The wee thing had in her hand a rose, which she held out to Augusta, saying, "Dis is my own white yose, Gussie; it g'ows in my vezy own garden; I has picked it for you." And Gussie laid down her work to caress the little flower-gatherer, with a motherly air which had in it something touching as well as strange, in a girl so young.

Gyneth liked these last traits better than what she had seen of Augusta during the first part of her visit; but she did not feel as if Miss Weather-

head were the sort of person who would care for her liking or help, and when she got home she watched anxiously for Lambert's return from riding with his father, that she might tell him she had not found courage to make any inquiries about the Sunday school, or say anything of her willingness to assist. He was not surprised, and answered that it was early days yet, and they should soon know the Weatherheads better.

But she was in a discouraged mood, and went on sadly,

"I'm afraid it was silly of me ever to think I could do anything, Lambert; it is easy to have visions about doing good, but when one comes to the point, one finds out one's own uselessness."

He did not know that these dispirited feelings were habitual to her, more habitual than the energy which she had shown of late; and so answered, hurriedly,

"It is rather too soon to despond; don't you think so, Gyneth?" And then turning to Edgar, invited him to come and ride his horse round to the stable.

Edgar's lip trembled a little, for the horse that Lambert had been riding was rather fiery; but he followed his brother to the hall door, where the groom was standing with the horses, and mounted bravely. Lambert would not let the groom lead the horse, but he walked by its side himself, and danger there was none; so Eddie forgot his fears, and ended by really enjoying the little ride. He ran into the house again in high spirits, and flying up to Gyneth, flung his arms round her, exclaiming,

"I wasn't cowardly to-day, sister, was I? Perhaps some day I shall be quite a brave man; for do you know, when Bertie was a little boy, he used to be frightened too."

"And how did he become brave?"

"I don't know exactly, but once I heard papa say that he had made a great mistake in the way he brought up Bertie, and had driven out one fear by another. I don't quite know what he meant: do you?"

"Yes, I think I do; for I remember now that, long, long ago, poor Bertie used to be punished for being cowardly; and I suppose at last he became more afraid of that than of the things that had first caused his fright."

Edgar's eyes filled with tears. "Bertie never told me that," he said. "Oh, how could papa be so cruel to him! He is never cruel to me; he kisses me when I am frightened."

"Yes," said Gyneth, regretting her former words, "papa sees that it is natural to you to be rather timid, and he will not be vexed with you so long as you do not give way to your fears, but try to be a brave boy. But when Lambert was little, papa did not know so much about children, and he thought cowardice was positive naughtiness. You must not grieve about it; it is all over now."

"Yes; for now I think papa loves Bertie better than any of us," said Edgar, joyfully. "But Bertie is still a little frightened of him, don't you think so, sister?"

It had not occurred to Gyneth before; but as she watched Lambert's manner to her father that evening, she could see that it was so. Colonel Deshon's tone towards his son was full of quiet affection, and a something akin to respect; but Lambert's responses were always shy and distant, not in the least indifferent or disrespectful, but as if moulded to formality by a feeling of constraint which he could not shake off.

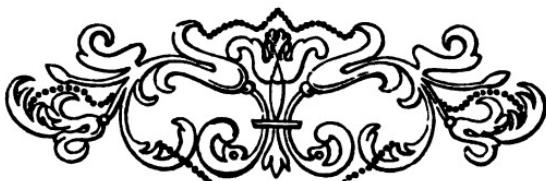
She remarked his pleased yet almost wondering

smile when the children coaxed their father into a game on the lawn, and insisted on blindfolding him and playing off on him all sorts of roguish tricks. Probably never in his life had Lambert ventured on such liberties ; and perhaps Mrs. Deshon was thinking so as well as Gyneth, for she approached her son as he stood watching the game, and laying her hand on his arm, said, caressingly,

“ What a merry rogue that little mouse Edgar becomes, when he has papa to play with ! He often makes me think of you when you were a child, my Bertie ; but you were always the little mouse, and I’m afraid were taught to be so. Just look at that merry varlet ; what new mischief is he deluding poor papa into ? ”

Lambert looked and laughed, in thorough enjoyment of his little brother’s fun ; but when his mother continued, “ Why don’t you go and be a child too, Bertie ? ” he drew still further back, and there was a tinge of melancholy in his quaint answer, “ I shouldn’t know how, mamma.”





CHAPTER IX.

"I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere."

Merchant of Venice.

WHEN Gyneth had been about ten days at home the family circle was increased by the arrival of Lawrence. Long-haired, pale, and foreign-looking, he had at first the air of a German student, but on further acquaintance there proved to be more of the French than the German element in him, while what there was in him of English was almost undiscoverable. He spoke his native language with a decidedly foreign accent, and relapsed continually into French, and occasionally into German; talked fluently of foreign literature while seeming intensely ignorant of that of his own country; quoted De Musset's poetry, and Richter's prose; strewed his room over with rubbishy-looking paper books, entitled "Bibliothèque du chemin de fer;" and completed his mother's and sister's astonishment by producing an immense meerschaum with a picture of the "Lurlei" enamelled on its porcelain bowl.

Colonel Deshon would have remonstrated, but

his wife said smiling, "Never mind, dear Edgar, let us leave him to enjoy it in peace just for this first day or two, provided he confines his smoking to the garden." Accordingly the garden became at once Lawrence's favourite retreat, and he established himself there the very first morning with his books, that he might pursue both his smoking and his cramming for the examination undisturbed.

Gyneth resigned most of her indoor employments to sit on the grass beside him, find references for him, and hear him repeat long columns of dates, and various dry statistics. She was rewarded for her patience, and endurance of the meerschaum, by many little confidences delivered incidentally, and some amusing anecdotes of foreign school-life, not to mention sundry pretty chivalric little speeches, such as no English-bred boy would have thought of bestowing on a sister.

Lawrence was very good-looking, only wanting colour to make him handsome, and the sleepy brown eyes which he lifted from his book now and then, were, to Gyneth's thinking, quite beautiful; she liked their dreaminess of expression, and would have admired the languid grace that generally characterized her brother's movements if she had not detected in it a little affectation. He could be animated enough when he chose, "vif" in look and tone, and profuse in gesticulation after the manner of foreigners. She was sure he must be clever, he seemed so little daunted by the difficulties of the examination, and talked of trying his chance in French, German, and drawing, besides the *sine qua non* mathematics, and "English of course," as confidently as if failure were a thing impossible. His family were almost equally confident, with the exception of Lambert, who said little, but watched his brother at his studies, and confided a private doubt to Gyneth that Lawrence

had gone deep enough in mathematics, moreover hinting that proficiency in English might not be so "of course" as Lawrence appeared to imagine. Gyneth acknowledged that he seemed by no means "well up" in English literature, and began a course of private cramming on that subject, telling him the names, dates, and histories of England's chief literary worthies, and furnishing him with a list of all their greatest works; it should not be *her* fault, if, when asked who wrote "Comus" he should reply "Dr. Johnson," as was once actually done by some youthful ignoramus.

It was only in the evening that Lawrence could afford time for these lighter studies, and then he used to lie full length on the grass, repeating Gyneth's instructions after her, and glancing up with a wearily uttered "Est-ce tout?" at each pause in her recapitulation. With all her efforts, she could not be sure of having done much good, especially as he pertinaciously continued to confuse Lord Bacon with Roger Bacon, the inventor of gunpowder, and persisted in affirming that "Blair's Grave" and what he called "Les nuits de Young" were the two finest poems in the English language, a not uncommon delusion among Frenchmen, but one quite unpardonable in a true born Briton. As for the meaning of obsolete English words, the plots of Shakespeare's plays, and a hundred other things that examiners *will* ask about; he was utterly ignorant of them all; but then to be sure he knew half Schiller's tragedies by heart, and could write an account of the life and writings of Voltaire at a minute's notice.

Gyneth was all anxiety on the day when he set off with Colonel Deshon for London, where the examination was to be held, but both he and his father were in good spirits, and took a cheerful farewell of the home party, the Colonel turning

back at the door to say, "Remember, Lambert, I depute to you my authority as master of the house, keep good order, mind, and don't let Ellis tyrannize over mamma." And then, noticing Edgar's look of delight at the idea of Bertie's being master, he added playfully, "take care, Eddie, you will have to be on your very best behaviour, for I suspect Bertie will be very particular." A warning which in no way terrified Edgar, who wriggled about like a merry eel, and made such demonstrations of fearless satisfaction as showed he anticipated no harshness in his brother's rule. The examination was to last about ten days, and Colonel Deshon meant to await its conclusion, so Lambert had really some opportunity for exercising the functions his father had bestowed on him, and in his gentle, unobtrusive way he certainly contrived to fulfil them most carefully. Mrs. Deshon declared that his influence over Ellis was magical, and that whenever her husband was absent in future, she must assuredly send off express for him to keep order for her; she rather gloried in her own incapability, and appealed to Lambert as constantly as if he had been really master of the house and the supreme authority, telling the children to mind him, and even occasionally referring Gyneth to his decisions. Gyneth would have found this very disagreeable if he had been the domineering fellow she once fancied him, and even as it was her mother's "Oh, my dear, I don't know I'm sure, ask Bertie," seemed sometimes a little tiresome when it concerned matters which she could quite well have decided for herself if she had been allowed to do so. Decide them she did in fact, for Bertie heartily disliked giving any opinion, and only did so in deference to his mother's wishes, leaving Gyneth to follow his advice or not as she felt inclined; he never seemed to dictate, and was chary

of commands even to the children, but certainly Lewis had in no way exaggerated the greatness of his influence in his home.

On the Sunday following Colonel Deshon's departure, Mrs. Deshon had a very bad headache, and did not go to Church in the afternoon, so as Lambert was at the Sunday school, Gyneth, Fanny, and Edgar walked to Church alone. The day was so warm, that they were glad to walk slowly, and the children were full of conversation about one of Monro's allegories, which Gyneth had been reading to them, and some hymns which they had been learning to say to their mamma. "Lambert chose mine," said Fanny, "it is one from 'The Child's Christian Year,' I daresay you know it, Gyneth; he likes so much those verses in it:

'LORD, in Thy Kingdom there shall be
 No aliens from each other,
But even as he loves himself
 Each saint shall love his brother.'

'When in Thy courts we meet, below,
 To mourn our sinful living,
And with one mingling voice repeat,
 Confession, Creed, Thanksgiving ;'

'Make us to hear in each sweet word,
 Thy HOLY SPIRIT calling
To oneness with Thy Church and Thee,
 That heavenly bond forestalling.'

"He always likes those sort of pieces, about unity and living in love."

"How do you find out what he likes?" asked Gyneth, smiling.

"Oh, by the things he chooses for us to read and learn, and by his books, he has got such nice books up in his room. And sometimes he talks to us a little, especially on Sundays, I always like Sunday

evenings, don't you, Eddie? because Bertie is sure to be so pleasant."

"And he tells us martyr stories," said Edgar, enthusiastically, his whole face lighting up. "He told us about the Theban legion last Sunday. Wouldn't you like to have been S. Maurice, sister?"

Gyneth's look said "yes."

"I have read Neale's account of it in 'The Followers of the LORD,'" she replied, "it is most beautiful, and I think—but what is the matter, Eddie?" for the little face so radiant a minute before, was pale with sudden fright.

"The cows! the nasty horrid cows!" gasped Edgar in a terrified whisper which to Fanny sounded so excessively ludicrous that she burst out laughing. A number of cows were certainly advancing towards them across the common, probably being driven home for milking, and their tormentors, the flies, had rather excited them, so that they were dashing about in a wild angry way, which to poor little timid Edgar seemed truly terrific.

Gyneth had no particular liking for excited cows, having been once run at by one, but cowardice was not in her nature, so she endeavoured to reassure Edgar, promising to take care of him, and reminding him that they must keep straight on if they wished to get to church in good time. He allowed her to take his hand and lead him on, but as soon as they got close to the herd, who with their tossing heads and great strong horns did certainly look rather formidable, he twitched his hand out of hers again, and fairly ran away.

Gyneth ran a few steps after him, but fear had lent him swiftness, and he flew along so quickly in the direction of home that she saw she might have a long race before she caught up with him. "What shall I do?" she said, turning in dismay to Fanny,

"I don't know whether if I caught him even, I could persuade him to encounter the cows again, and yet I am sure he will be so unhappy, poor child, when he finds that his fears have put church out of the question for him."

"But oh, isn't he silly, Gyneth?" said Fan, "why the cows have nearly all passed us now, and scarcely so much as looked at us. If Bertie had been here,—and see, there he is," and she pointed to a figure in the distance, which was certainly Lambert coming to meet them.

"Let us run to him," said Gyneth, "he will know what we ought to do, only—I'm afraid he will be vexed."

Fanny laughed. "Gyneth, I do think you're as much afraid of Bertie, as Edgar is of the cows; it's so funny to hear you talking of him as if he were some great black bogie who would bite Eddie's head off."

Gyneth's sweet blush, and sweeter smile came in quick succession. "I'm very silly, I know, Fan," she admitted good humouredly.

But for all that, she was sorry that Fanny should be the first to tell of Edgar's fright, phrasing it in this way. "Oh, Bertie, what *do* you think? Eddie was so awfully frightened of those cows that he ran away home, and the minute before he was talking about martyrs, and looking as if he should like to be one."

"Yes, he was talking so nicely," said Gyneth, "but, poor little man, I suppose he couldn't help being frightened, only what shall we do about him, Lambert? for I think he must be half way home at least."

"You and Fan go on to church, and I'll run after him and bring him back," said Lambert, "don't wait for us, or you'll have to hurry, and you look quite heated already."

"Yes, it's too warm for running almost, I'm sorry you should go, Lambert, and perhaps Eddie won't come after all, for he will still have to encounter the cows."

"Oh, he'll come," said Lambert, with quiet certainty, and he started off.

Gyneth would like to have waited, but to be in time for the service was such a plain duty, that she walked resolutely on, only turning her head now and then to see if her brothers were coming. She was obliged to go into church without having seen anything of them, and the reading of the Exhortation had commenced before they made their appearance.

Anthony Waller was at church, and joined them when they came out, for he had a general invitation to dine with them on Sundays, which, as Mrs. Deshon observed, "was so much better for him than to dine at mess, where he must meet some who cared little how Sunday was kept."

He remarked on his cousins having been late for the service, observing satirically, "I should have thought in your code, Lambert, that would have been a deadly sin."

"It was me who made Bertie late," said Edgar, who found courage to accuse himself, rather than allow it to be supposed that Lambert could be in fault; and he added for Gyneth's benefit, "Bertie wouldn't let me run, because I was very tired, and he said it might make me ill; and he wouldn't run on without me either."

Gyneth's eyes thanked her brother for his consideration; decidedly Bertie's gentleness might be relied on, she should never, she thought, be afraid to trust Edgar to him again.

"How did you get through the cows, Eddie?" she inquired, as Anthony and Lambert walked on a little in front.

"Oh, they didn't hurt me, sister," he answered, "Bertie spoke to one, and patted it, and said, if we'd had more time he would have made me pat it too."

"Bertie is a magician," said Gyneth, laughing, but Edgar did not even smile, and replied mournfully, "I thought I was getting brave, Gyneth, and now I've been worse than ever. Bertie says cowardice is a *sins* when it makes us give up our duty."

"Ah, he meant if you had stayed away from church rather than face the cows, for instance; yes, it sounds severe, but I think it is true, Eddie, only you needn't be so unhappy about it, for you *did* overcome your fears."

"But Bertie had to fetch me before I would come," faltered Edgar, and Gyneth could not console him, though he made no further expression of his sorrow, and answered Fanny's raillery in the quiet uncommunicative manner which generally characterised him, and which might be supposed to proceed from either modesty or pride, according as people were inclined to judge it.

Mrs. Deshon's headache got better towards evening, and at dinner she was most charming; it seemed as if she had determined that Anthony should not find dining with them on Sundays a penance, or be driven to seek in worldly amusement a refuge from puritanical gloom. Not content with talking herself, she was determined to make her son talk too, and indeed Lambert, perhaps feeling it incumbent on him to act the part of host agreeably, entered more into the conversation than was usual with him, and that so pleasantly, that Anthony's superciliousness melted before the genial influence of such a host and hostess, and he too fell insensibly into the same flow of happy talk.

It was not the same kind of talk as Gyneth had been wont to enjoy with her grandmother and Lewis, but it was very pleasant, and when leaving the dinner-table they all wandered out into the garden it seemed to chime in delightfully with the evening song of the birds, and the distant ripple of the sea. And when after a while they sat down together on the lawn, Gyneth was so much interested in an account her mother was giving of the Béguinage at Ghent, that she did not notice that Lambert had left them, nor take much heed when first Edgar, and then Fanny stole away to join him. Anthony seemed by no means disposed to make fun of the good Béguines, as Gyneth had half feared he might, and when Mrs. Deshon had finished speaking, gave them an interesting description of a dear, good, quaint old *sœur de charité*, who had once come to his rescue when he was taken ill in an out-of-the-way French village, while travelling alone with his tutor. His life had been in danger, and the people of the village where he had been seized with the fever were desperately afraid of infection, so that he would have been left without any one but his tutor,—a young Oxford man, very kind, but extremely inexperienced,—to take care of him, had not the innkeeper's wife be-thought herself of fetching the brave-hearted *Sœur*, who long before had put her life in her hand, and vowed herself to attendance on the sick and suffering. It was most amusing, and not a little touching, to hear Anthony's account of all she had done for him; he was then a boy of thirteen, and the good sister's heart had been drawn towards him by his illness and helplessness—little foreigner as he was, and little heretic as she considered him,—so that she not only fulfilled the needful offices of a nurse, but lavished on him a thousand motherly affectionate attentions, calling him her

"petit fils," her "cher petit cœur," and when he got better, bringing him little sweet cakes which some of the other sisters made for him, and which seemed to him the most delicious things that ever were invented.

"She was the most cheerful old being imaginable," continued Anthony; "as full of smiles as if her life were one long holiday, though it was anything but that, for I believe she actually had to get up at four o'clock every morning, at least she told me that was the rule of her order."

"Which you, lazy boy, think the greatest hardship in the world," said Mrs. Deshon playfully. "But how charming the old sœur must have been. I suppose she was very ugly, wasn't she? most old Frenchwomen are, but at any rate she didn't make herself look worse by donning a funereal costume like some of our English sisters."

"No, her grey-blue dress was very becoming, and as for the whiteness of her cap, I have never seen anything like it since. Poor old Sœur Monique! I should like immensely to see her again. If travelling were not so fatiguing I would go over to France on purpose."

"It must be very beautiful to see Sisters of Charity so cheerful," said Gyneth, "but I wonder they can be, going about among such scenes of misery as they do."

"Ah, but they take hearts-ease with them, and the consciousness of that keeps them bright," said Mrs. Deshon, "besides Sœur Monique was a Frenchwoman, and 'gaieté du cœur' is much more natural to the French than to us."

"It is so difficult to fancy a combination of gaiety and tenderness; most gay people are not tender at all," remarked Gyneth thoughtfully.

"Perhaps not," replied Mrs. Deshon; but Anthony looked up at her smiling, and said, "I don't

subscribe to that remark, Gyneth, for I see before me an example of both combined; Cousin Fanny would have made a very good *sœur de charité* if she had taken to the profession early as *Sœur Monique* did."

"*Mamma!*" exclaimed Gyneth, looking up at her too, and reflecting the smile, "yes, I see what you mean. Should you like to have been a sister, *mamma?*"

"I'm afraid I should have enjoyed it only too much, unless my gaiety became extinguished beneath that formidable poke-bonnet which some of our dear, good English sisters think it necessary to wear. I say 'too much,' because I can see, Gyneth, that your ideal of a sister is a person made up of devotion, self-denial, and melancholy."

"Oh, *mamma!* But I own that I cannot fancy an English Sister of Mercy being gay; she might be cheerful, and very sweet and gentle, but—"

"She must never laugh!" interrupted Mrs. Deshon playfully, "that would be destructive of the ideal at once. Did *Sœur Monique* ever laugh, Anthony?"

"Did she not? She was as jolly as possible, all in her funny innocent way; now and then such perpetual high spirits struck me as a little fatiguing, but on the whole commend me to that style of piety; I only wish Parry had taken up that line, instead of the extra-solemn."

"Then Mrs. Parry's giggles ought to enchant you! But seriously, Anthony, I am not going to let you laugh at Mr. Parry's or anybody else's piety; it is much too deep a matter for jest."

"Oh, chacun à son gout," said Anthony, with an indifference which Gyneth thought painful, but he got up as he spoke, to gather some sweet-peas to twine in Katie's hair, and when he came back changed the subject by observing, "What good

sermons Mr. Weatherhead gives, doesn't he? so manly and straight to the mark, and yet not verging on that unrefined and declamatory style which I do so especially abominate."

"They remind me rather of some printed sermons I have read," said Gyneth, naming a volume by a well-known theological writer.

"Oh I never read sermons," rejoined Anthony, "but Cousin Fanny reads them to me sometimes. Don't you remember, cousin, when you nursed me through that illness I had after I landed in Corfu, how you used to insist on reading out to me a sermon and part of the service every Sunday?"

"Of course I did, I wasn't going to let you be a heathen, because you couldn't go to Church; but don't you think he's a very fortunate boy, Gyneth, to have had lady-nurses in both his illnesses, first Sœur Monique, and then me?"

"Ah, but Sœur Monique didn't read sermons," said Anthony, pretending to yawn, adding however, "you were quite right, cousin, and I really have not consumed the books you gave me—'The Christian Year,' and what was that other one?—in allumettes for my cigars as you predicted I should; I have read in them with all diligence."

Mrs. Deshon glanced at her daughter with a look that might be taken to mean, "Is he not a dear fellow?" and little Katie directed her cousin's attention to some coloured pictures of "Joseph and his brethren," which she held in her hand, saying, "I s'all ask Eddie to yead about it to you, s'all I? or will you yead it to me?"

Anthony took her up on his knee, and turned over the pictures, sometimes reading a few of the printed lines beneath them for Katie's edification, and often turning to Mrs. Deshon or Gyneth with some half-playful, half-ingenuous comment.

It was a delicious evening, the birds still twittered

forth a little song from time to time, the sea murmured musically in the distance, the roses exhaled a faint sweet fragrance, and soft, pinky, coral-like clouds hovered in the sky, above the richer glory of the sunset.

This sitting on the grass beneath the rosebushes, among these pleasant sights and sounds, was very charming, and altogether it was a pretty, graceful way of passing the time, but Gyneth did not feel satisfied that even innocent recreation and rest should absorb *all* her Sunday evening, so by-and-by she rose and went into the house. Lambert was seated at the library window, with Edgar perched on the arm of his chair, and Fanny open-mouthed and eager-eyed on a stool at his feet; he was reading something to them, and seemed to have thoroughly enchain'd their interest, though to Gyneth his voice sounded a little monotonous.

"Could you lend me a book?" she asked, "Fanny has been praising your library to me."

"It is not very extensive, I'm afraid, but you are welcome to anything it contains," he replied, "shall I fetch some books down for you, or will you like to choose one for yourself?"

"I should like to choose one, please, and don't let me disturb you, I have been quite troublesome enough in interrupting the reading, haven't I, Edgar?"

"No, no," said Lambert smiling, "I'm sure that Eddie sees that 'sister' has a right to be attended to as well as himself; you must let me come and reach the books down for you, the shelves are so high," and so saying he led the way up stairs, regardless of Fanny's "what a bore!"

"I miss grandmamma's great store of books so much," said Gyneth, as she followed him, "mamma seems to have but few, and I have read all my own many times."

"And mine too, I daresay," said Lambert, "see, there is but a small collection."

Gyneth's eye travelled quickly along the orderly range of volumes big and little. "'The Church of the Fathers,' oh how interesting that is! 'Bishop Taylor's Sermons'; grandmamma has those. 'The Life of Sister Rosalie,' ah, I want to read that, and it so happens we have just been talking about Sisters of Mercy; Anthony has been telling us about a French sœur, who nursed him when he was ill abroad, and mamma and he have been praising the gaiety of the French sisters. They seem to think our own sisters gloomy in comparison; it is certainly a pity that they wear such black ugly bonnets."

"I don't think it matters what they wear," said Lambert.

"Don't you? oh but surely goodness should be made as beautiful as possible, and that style of dress is repulsive."

"Goodness *is* beautiful in itself," he answered, "and if their dress symbolises their regardlessness of the world's attractions, and their devotion to their calling, it must surely be the best for them. But I don't pretend to be a judge of the matter, for I have only seen one or two Anglican sisters."

"I saw a whole sisterhood once. Mr. Helmore knew the chaplain, and he took me to their chapel, and schools, and everything. I liked it all so much, and some of the sisters had such sweet calm faces, that have haunted me ever since like faces in pictures, but others were very unlike one's ideal."

"Perhaps that was just as well," said Lambert; "we don't want ideal sisters, so much as real hard-working ones, and outward appearance matters very little."

"I don't know, there is something very winning

in loveliness, either of features or expression, and I like too to think that 'great beauty may be offered to God like any other great natural gift.' "

"So it may, but that cannot apply to those who have it not to offer. The sisters I saw were ordinary looking enough, but it was impossible not to reverence them."

"Oh yes, and I can't bear to hear them jested about, they are so good. Don't you wish there were some of them at Harbournouth?"

"Yes, indeed. Miss Boyd is like one, *is* one almost in all but the name: I hope you will see her some day."

"Oh, I hope so too; I should like it so much. It comforts one that there are such people in the world, doesn't it, Bertie?"

His "yes" was full of meaning, and a shy pleasure dawned in his face that she had called him "Bertie;" it was the first time that she had used this, his familiar, household name, in speaking to him. But he did not seek to prolong the conversation, as he was anxious to get back to the children, so Gyneth selected a book, and passed on to her room. She drew a chair to the window, and sat down, not reading much after all, but thinking over many things which that evening's conversation had suggested. Her room strewn with her own distinctive possessions looked very different from what it had done when she was first installed in it. True, the dolphin-ornamented fireplace was there incongruous as ever, but now above the mantelpiece, on each side of the Corfu church, hung a beautiful engraving, one from Ary Scheffer's "S. Augustine and his mother Monica;" the other from Carl Muller's picture of "the Last Supper." On the wall, opposite the bed, hung another engraving, that wonderful conception of Scheffer's "Le CHRIST Consolateur;" a beautiful statuette

representing "Faith" stood on a bracket in the corner, and some handsome books were scattered on the table.

The "S. Augustine" had been a present from Lewis, and Gyneth was never tired of watching those two noble faces, the saintly mother's, and the penitent son's,—her's sharpened and paled by years of anxiety and sorrow, yet full of celestial calm and joy ineffable in the fruition of her hopes now granted to her; his, keen with intellect, bright with heavenward aspiration, yet full of the deep mournfulness which is inseparable from true penitence. He had suffered, and was still to suffer, she was near her rest, but both in this hour were lapped in deep repose, and together they sat looking out over the Tiber, and conversing of those blessed streams which "make glad the city of God."

Gyneth could not look at this picture of the pure mother and the nobly-contrite son, without a stirring of the heart, and a thought of Him Who "sets His saints before us in the way, lest we should faint or stray;" and ere long the throbbing desire for a like holiness passed into a prayer, and then the light grew too dim for reading, and the stillness invited to meditation, for the birds had at last ceased their singing, and all sounds were hushed, save the low "song of the sea."



CHAPTER X.

“ Fair Greece ! sad relic of departed worth !
Immortal, though no more : though fallen, great.
Who now shall lead thy scattered children forth,
And long accustomed bondage uncreate ?

* * * * *

Spirit of freedom ! when on Phyle's brow,
Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus and his train,
Could'st thou forebode the dismal hour, which now
Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain ?
Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land ;
Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,
Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,
From birth till death enslaved : in word, in deed unmanned.”

Childe Harold.

MRS. ALBAN ROSS did not let Gyneth forget her promise to lunch with her : she came to fetch her one morning, and carried her off in triumph, a little chagrined at finding that she could not have Lambert too, as he had promised to ride with his mother, and would not break the engagement. The Rosses lived near the rector, and as Mrs. Ross's ponies drew up at her own door, a stream of small Weatherheads passed, on their way for a walk. The little Contessa touched Horace with the tip of her driving-whip, and made him look round.

"Where is your sister? Is she not going out with you to-day?"

"No, she says it's so stupid walking down by the beach every day. Now I think it's jolly."

"Ah, it is 'jolly' for you," rejoined Mrs. Ross with the drollest pronunciation of that thoroughly English word, "but your poor sister finds it triste, I daresay. Give her my kind regards, and ask her if she will take a drive with Miss Deshon and me this afternoon. If she will, I will call for her at half-past three; you can come and tell me what she says."

"All right," said Horace, and he ran after the others exclaiming, "Mrs. Ross is going to take Gussie for a drive, isn't she jolly kind?"

"I like that little boy," said Mrs. Ross to Gyneth, "he is such a little John Bull with his 'jollys,' and all his funny words. He often comes in to feed my bird, he loves the dear creature almost as I do; see, is it not a beauty?" and she led Gyneth to the balcony, where a beautiful scarlet lory was swinging himself to and fro in his gilded cage. There were great stands of flowers in both windows, and a perfect pyramid of roses on the centre table, moorish cushions worked in gold were on the sofa, a group of gorgeously tinted stuffed birds adorned the chiffonier, and altogether there was a profusion of ornament and colour about the room, which was large and cheerful looking, but not particularly well furnished, nor at all remarkable for neatness.

"And now you will sing to me, will you not?" said Gyneth, glancing towards the piano, the top of which was strewn with piles of music.

"Ah, yes, to be sure I will," and without more ado the pretty Greek tossed her plumed hat down on a chair, threw off the mantilla which she wore as a scarf, and sat down to the instrument.

She ran her fingers lightly over the notes, and then burst at once into an Italian cavatina, so difficult that few amateur-singers would have attempted it, yet so well suited to the powers of her fine voice that not the slightest effort was perceptible; there were no contortions of the face, or throat, it was as if a little bird were trilling forth its song, naturally, easily, and sweetly, without exertion, and without fatigue. A simple English ballad followed, then a quaint little German volks-lied, and then the singer paused to ask, "Is that enough?"

"Not half," said Gyneth, "I want some of your own songs, your Greek songs, please, you don't know how I enjoy hearing you sing."

She looked as if she did, certainly, the broad pale brow was bright with pleasure, the calm soft eyes all radiant.

"You *do* love music," said Mrs. Ross, looking up at her, "I see it in your eyes. Ah, let us be friends, call me Photinée, and I will call you Gyneth; you smile, that is right,—now kiss me!"

That rosebud mouth was irresistible, and Gyneth's lips met it in a willing caress. Then the arch coaxing face grew suddenly earnest, and turning round to the piano, Photinée began one of her national songs. It was no little bird now, but a woman's passionate soul pouring itself forth in a strange wild melody, so different from the more conventional harmonies to which Gyneth was accustomed, that it had for her all the charm of novelty. And there was something in her heart that responded to that cry for liberty, to that yearning so pathetic and so musical, after all that was noble and free. She felt now as she had done when she pleaded for the Greeks in that enthusiastic letter which in a colder mood had seemed to her so silly, and mixed memories of William Tell,

Marco Bozaris, and other champions of freedom in all ages and climes, came rushing through her mind.

But even while she listened the song changed, first to a serenade, arch, sweet, and fanciful, telling of love and bliss, a highpitched yet silvery melody such as may be heard on a summer eve in the Ionian isles: then to another eager passionate strain, wilder even than the first, and no longer asking only freedom for the oppressed but vengeance on the oppressors. Gyneth still leaned over the piano, listening, but while she knew by the flash in her friend's eyes and the ardour in her voice, that her whole heart was still in her song, her own soul had escaped from the enchantment, and was echoing to a far different strain. A chant, grave, calm, and full of subdued and solemn harmony, seemed to float in her ears, it was the last she had heard in the cathedral, and some of its words were these, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the LORD."

"What are you thinking of?" said Photinée, breaking off suddenly, when she perceived the change in Gyneth's expression.

"I am not sure if I understand your song rightly," Gyneth replied, evading the question, "I can fancy a meaning for it, but perhaps it is not the right one; would you mind translating the words for me?"

Mrs. Ross did so, and Gyneth found the meaning was to the full as fierce and revengeful as she had fancied it, though the words in their prose translation dropped so tranquilly from the lips of the young Ionian, that it was difficult to fancy she attached as much signification to them as had appeared in her singing.

"You are wondering," she said, "whom I wish for vengeance on,—not on you English; when I was a child I hated you, for I was born in Cepha-

Ionia, where, as one of your own writers has said, the people are more Greek than in Greece itself, and then I would gladly have given myself as a subject to King Otho, and ignored your Victoria; but afterwards I came to live with my uncle in Corfu, and there I got first an English friend, and then an English husband, so that I can no longer hate you, for you have stolen my heart."

"I do not believe you hate any one really," said Gyneth; "you were only making believe to be fierce when you sung so."

"Making believe! ah, you do not know, how can I but hate the Turks? those cruel, cowardly, wicked people, who oppress my nation, and are such bitter enemies to my faith? If it were not for them, we might have a Greek Empire again, as we will have some day, when Turkey is blotted out of the map for ever!"

"And what is to become of the Turks?"

"Oh, I care not, 'l'homme malade,' as the French call the Turkish Empire, cannot last much longer, and I would hasten his end, that is all: let them join their false prophet in his moslem paradise!"

Gyneth said nothing, but looked so grave that Photinée again inquired—and this time very earnestly—what she was thinking of.

"Of a Collect in our Church Service," she replied hesitatingly.

"Tell it me." The voice was urgent and pleading, and Gyneth repeated reverently, "'Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word, and so fetch them home, Blessed Lord, to Thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd.' That is what our Church teaches us to feel," she added.

"Ah, that is beautiful, and it is easy for you ; the Turks never injured your countrymen, except in the Crusades. But while we remember our martyrs, we cannot forget who made them such ; my own great grandfather was killed by the Turks, because he would not renounce Christianity. What would your Church say to that ?"

"She would ask, I think, as she does now, that God would be pleased to 'forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and to turn their hearts.' And in your own Greek Litanies—"

Photinée put out her hands with a pretty gesture of deprecation. "That will do, I own myself vanquished ; all who are true Christians can forgive. I do believe there are good Sicilians who can pray even for the King of Naples."

"Oh, I hope so," said Gyneth, earnestly ; "if people are very wicked, or terribly mistaken, that seems the more reason why they should be interceded for."

"And they should be the better for the intercessions of such sweet souls as yours," said Photinée, kissing her ; "are many English girls like you ?"

"I don't know," said Gyneth, with sudden indifference ; she was quite calm again now, and colder than before ; this was almost always in her the re-action from a few moments of unreserve. A word could unlock her lips ; but a word could chill them into silence again ; when her thoughts were turned away from her subject to herself, she became mute directly.

"It is time we had lunch," said Mrs. Ross, consulting her watch ; "I must go and find that husband of mine ; but first let me take your bonnet up stairs for you, and perhaps you will like to smooth your hair."

She tripped lightly up the stairs, humming a

merry tune, and after conducting Gyneth to her bedroom, left her to arrange her toilette by herself, and went off in search of Captain Ross. It was some minutes before she returned, explaining her delay by saying that she had found Horace Weatherhead waiting at the front door to deliver a message from Gussie, and had brought him in, to give him some tarts, "which my little John Bull thinks very 'jolly' indeed."

She took Gyneth down with her to the dining-room, where luncheon was on the table, and Captain Ross and another officer were standing talking together; the latter was introduced as Mr. Armstrong; and Gyneth recognized him by the name as the "wealthy button-maker's son," of whom she had heard her mother speak. He was a quiet, gentlemanly young man enough, and from his musical taste, had become a great favourite with Mrs. Ross, who had found in him the warmest advocate for her scheme of a regimental concert.

"I came to tell you," he said, presently, "that the men are going to have a rehearsal this afternoon, in the messroom. I think it will prove to be a very good room for the voice, but we want your opinion, Mrs. Ross, and also as to whether the singers are up to their parts yet, or not. A good many of us have promised to be there, and I hope some ladies will consent to be of the audience, too. I may count upon you, Mrs. Ross, may I not? and on you, too, I hope, Miss Deshon?"

"Oh certainly, we will go," said Photinée, joyfully; "I am so glad you happen to be with me to-day, Gyneth, your musical ear will do us good service."

"But indeed I am no judge," objected Gyneth, and to say the truth, the proposal rather alarmed her. She would not say any more before the gentlemen, but when Photinée took her up stairs to

put on her bonnet, remarking they should have time to drive to the barracks, and hear at least part of the rehearsal, before going for their pre-arranged country-drive, she asked if she might be allowed to stay by herself, and read a book instead.

"Stay by yourself! not come with me! why? I do not understand," exclaimed Mrs. Ross, in perplexity.

"Only that I think I would rather not go, if you would please go without me! I shall be quite happy among your books and music, and I can put on my bonnet, so as not to keep you waiting when you call for me."

"All very nice, I daresay, but I am not quite a bear. No, if you will not come, I will stay with you; but why should you mind? I shall be your chaperone, you know, and poor Mr. Armstrong will be so disappointed if we do not come."

Gyneth tried in vain to persuade her that Mr. Armstrong only wanted *her*. Mrs. Ross would not hear of going unless Gyneth went too; and at last fearing that she was making a fuss about nothing, and allowing her shyness to lead her into selfishness, Gyneth gave up her objections, and put on her bonnet.

The bay ponies dashed merrily into the barrack-square, putting to flight a party of recruits who were going through the goose-step. Captain Ross gave Gyneth his arm, and took her into the mess-room, where, on a sort of dais, at one end of the room, were seated the musicians, instrumental and vocal, while rows of chairs were ranged opposite to them, to accommodate the audience. A knot of officers in the uniform of two or three different regiments, were gathered together, near one of the doors, and among so many strangers, it was rather a relief to Gyneth to recognize the features of her

Cousin Anthony. He put up his eyeglass to make sure that it was she, and then with a smile which Gyneth felt or fancied to be more than usually supercilious, crossed the room, and shook hands with her.

"Is Cousin Fanny here?" he inquired.

"No, I came with Mrs. Ross," Gyneth replied.

"Oh," and he turned to speak to the Contessa, who seemed to know and be known by everybody, and was laughing and talking with a dozen gentlemen at once, in her inimitably graceful way.

Mr. Armstrong was very polite and attentive to Gyneth, selected a comfortable chair for her, brought her a programme of the performance, and told her the names of the men who were to sing. There was first an overture, and as it happened, a favourite of Gyneth's—the overture to William Tell; then a part song, chiefly distinguished by extreme energy on the part of the military vocalists; then a solo, by a very young private, with a beautiful tenor voice; then an instrumental piece again, Beethoven's "Adelaïde," with cornet obbligato. Gyneth was delighted, and good-natured Mr. Armstrong so enjoyed her enjoyment, that he directed more attention to it than she at all wished.

But then came a duet between two young sergeants, who apparently had each ideas of their own on the way in which the song should be rendered, and produced woeful discord by their several attempts at perfection. The bandmaster beat time, flourished his baton, and gesticulated in vain; worse discord, closed by a dead stop, was the only result.

"Those men are too conceited to sing well," said Captain Ross, smiling.

"Their performance had better be expunged from the programme," said Anthony.

"Oh, but they are very good, steady fellows,

and one of them really has a remarkably nice voice," pleaded Mr. Armstrong. "I don't think they're quite agreed about the time of the song, that's all; you could decide the question in a minute, Mrs. Ross."

"Shall I go and look at the song?" she said readily. "Poor men! we must not let them give up. And there is Lawson," (the bandmaster,) "looking quite black too. Come, Frederick, let us go and speak to them;" and before Gyneth, who was speaking to Anthony, could look round, she had taken her husband's arm, and started off, followed by Mr. Armstrong, and one or two others.

"So much for Mrs. Ross's chaperonage," said Anthony, in dismay at his cousin's isolated position.

"Yes, I am sorry I came; I thought there would have been other ladies."

"I almost wonder Cousin Fanny let you come without her; she was always very particular about Jeannie, or rather the colonel was."

"Mamma did not know; Mrs. Ross only asked me to lunch with her, and take a drive. But then Mr. Armstrong came, and pressed us to come here."

"That parvenu!" said Anthony, with as much disdain as his very soft voice could express.

Gyneth was silent, for in truth she rather preferred Mr. Armstrong to her aristocratic cousin, particularly in his present humour. Anthony would have played the knight-errant gallantly to a distressed damsel; but the damsel in this case kept her distress to herself, her air of gentle, grave dignity placing her beyond any need of his protection. She was secure in the feeling that all around her were gentlemen, and in her innocent thoughts esteemed all these stranger-officers as high-minded

and courteous as that "flower of courtesy," of whom Spenser sang; her only fear was that she had not done right in coming, and that her mother might be displeased with her.

But Anthony, who could not endure that his cousin should do anything that might be talked about, looked decidedly cross; and observed, as a sort of finale, "If Grace were to trust herself anywhere, with no better chaperone than a wild little foreigner, my mother would be in a perfect agony."

So quietly as she sat there, he could little guess how much vexation and perplexity he was causing his cousin. What would have been so unsuitable for Lady Grace Waller, must surely be equally wrong for Miss Deshon. Had she really then done something so very dreadful? Would her grandmother, would Lewis be shocked if they were to see her now?

All she said was, "You are not very complimentary to Mrs. Ross;" and even as she spoke a sudden sense of relief was visible in her expression, for at that moment a side-door opened, and gave admission to her brother Lambert. She could have flown to him in her gladness, but restrained herself; and her first joy was a little damped by the thought that perhaps he too might be shocked at her.

He came to her at once, a little surprised evidently at finding her there, but with not the least shadow of blame in his fair open face. "Oh, I am so glad you are come," was her eager greeting. "I thought you had gone out riding with mamma."

"I am going with mamma presently," he replied; "but Lawson sent her a notice of this rehearsal, so she asked me to ride down here first, and listen to a tune or two, as a sort of token that we take in-

terest in the matter. I did not expect to find *you* here."

"No, and I'm afraid I ought not to have come; but Mrs. Ross urged me so much I did not like to refuse; she wanted to come, and she would not come without me."

"You did not tell me that," said Mr. Waller.

"Why should she?" said Lambert, quietly, and so completely did his tone ignore any right on Anthony's part to criticise his sister's behaviour, that it was the little honourable's turn to look abashed.

Mrs. Ross came back to her seat with a pretty little apology for her neglect of Gyneth, and the concert went on. The duet was performed again, this time with much better success, and a chorus followed, after which Lambert rose to go, and Gyneth, determined not to stay behind him, rose also.

"Ah, time is passing, and we must not keep poor Miss Weatherhead waiting," said Photinée. "You are quite right in thinking we ought to go, Gyneth. Good-bye, Mr. Armstrong; you must stay and keep the performers in good humour."

Lambert rode beside the carriage till they reached Mr. Weatherhead's house, and then he spurred on to join his mother. Gyneth did not like to part with him, and almost wished herself back in the old times, when he might have taken her up pillion-wise, and carried her home; but it was something to feel that she had not shocked him, that what Anthony stigmatized as a want of due propriety, was by him looked upon only as an innocent mischance.

Photinée was very pleasant during the drive, and so unconscious of any offence that Gyneth could not be vexed with her. She was chiefly occupied in drawing out Augusta Weatherhead, who was delighted to find herself in such agreeable so-

society, and chattered away on all imaginable subjects, showing an unusual amount of quickness and information, though many of her remarks and opinions were evidently borrowed from her father, and merely a little coloured by her own tone of thought.

In speaking of the parish-schools she chanced to say, that her father would like to have some illuminated texts hung round the walls, such as Miss Boyd had in the Industrial School; and Gyneth, who thought, not unnaturally, that she had found one of those little opportunities of usefulness for which she was waiting, offered, very gently and modestly, to illuminate any texts that Mr. Weatherhead might wish, saying, that she had done some for the Traversham school, and had not found it very difficult.

But Miss Gussie had other views. "Oh, thank you," she said, "you are very kind, I'm sure; but papa said I should do them myself as soon as I could find any one to teach me to illuminate; he likes me to do those sort of things."

For a moment Gyneth was silent. Then she said, kindly, "I am not sure that I know enough myself to be able to teach you properly; but if you do not find any better instructor, I can show you if you like how I have been accustomed to do it, and you will find it very simple."

"Oh, thank you. And will you come some day and teach me? or shall I come to you? I daresay I shall soon pick it up."

Gyneth assented, and invited Gussie to spend an afternoon with her some day, promising then to initiate her into the mysteries of illuminating. Her obligingness won from Augusta the favourable opinion, delivered privately to Mrs. Ross, that "Miss Deshon was very amiable!" But Gyneth would have been amused if she had known that

Gussie added, "I don't think she's at all clever or original, though; she may know a great deal, but she certainly doesn't talk well, and her manner is so languid."

Photinée answered by an old saying, "Who knows the Dove's mind but the Doves?" which to Augusta was utterly incomprehensible, though from the meaning look which accompanied it, she guessed that Mrs. Ross thought she had not fathomed the capabilities of Gyneth Deshon.

In the course of their drive they passed, or rather were passed by, Mrs. Deshon and Lambert. Mrs. Deshon was an excellent horsewoman, and in her riding-habit looked so youthful, that it was difficult to imagine her the mother of the young man at her side. She checked her horse for a minute, and shook hands with Mrs. Ross and Augusta, observing "Ah, Photinée, I shall be afraid to trust Gyneth to you another time;" and though Mrs. Ross only laughed and answered, "Oh, no, you will not," Gyneth felt uncomfortable, and was glad when she found herself at home again, and alone with her mother, that she might hear what she really thought of the visit to the mess-room.

"I should have supposed that you might have known Papa wouldn't like it, my dear," was Mrs. Deshon's remonstrance.

"I did think perhaps he would not, mamma," Gyneth answered, "but I wasn't sure, and it seemed selfish to spoil Mrs. Ross's pleasure. I thought the Rosses and Mr. Armstrong wouldn't have proposed my going, if there had been any harm in it."

"Harm! no! but Photinée does not take an English view of 'les convenances,' and Captain Ross, who is sensible enough in other respects, is perfectly silly where his wife is concerned. As for Mr. Armstrong, he is a very nice creature, and it

is convenient to have a man with four or five thousand a year in the regiment, but one can't expect him to be particularly well versed in the rules of good society."

"But do you know, mamma, I think in some things he is almost more truly gentlemanly than Anthony; he tried to make me comfortable, and not to let me feel out of place; whereas Anthony seemed to take pleasure in making me feel uncomfortable."

"Oh, Anthony is very fastidious, and has been accustomed to see his own sister hedged in with proprieties of all sorts. I daresay he was vexed, poor boy, at seeing you there with no better chaperone than Mrs. Ross!"

"Yes, that was what he said, but mamma, I wondered at his telling me so, he is almost a stranger to me though he is my second cousin."

"I suppose he thought the relationship authorised him, and my dear child, you will find the only way to avoid such remarks is by never giving occasion for them. Of course, living in that quiet out-of-the-way fashion, with grandmamma, you had not much reason to think what would be said of your doing so and so, but now you must be more particular. I believe that some people who know nothing about the matter, fancy that officers' daughters must needs be constantly in men's society, and picture to themselves juvenile lieutenants coming in and out at all hours of the day, and ensigns walking tame about the house, but there never was a greater mistake, and even if this state of things did actually exist in other families, Papa would never suffer it in *his*. . Anthony being a relation, we have of course made an exception in his favour, but we have never taken any other young man into intimacy except Alfred," (Mr. Hutchinson,) "whom we have known from a child;

and before her marriage, Jeannie was never allowed to go anywhere in public without being accompanied by either Papa or me."

Gyneth bent her head over her work, not knowing what to say; she could not suppose that her mother needed any assurance of her complete acquiescence in this system.

"It was fortunate that I happened to send Lambert down," Mrs. Deshon went on, "it must have been a comfort to you to have him, and it may very likely have been supposed that he had arranged to meet you there."

"But, mamma, I don't wish to be exonerated by a false supposition."

Mrs. Deshon smiled. "My dear, there was a little pride in that speech, as well as love of truth. I am afraid my little lecture has offended you, but, indeed, I meant no blame for the past, only a hint for the future."

"And if you had, mamma, I ought not to be offended," said Gyneth, forcing herself to speak pleasantly, though it was difficult just then, not because she was vexed, but because she was grieved; "I am very sorry I was so foolish to-day, but indeed I will never go anywhere with Mrs. Ross again, since you do not wish it."

"You wouldn't wish it yourself, my love, I should think."

"No, indeed, mamma, but—" and her face burned with blushes—"it seems from what you have been saying, that my own feelings cannot be trusted to, so I had better be guided entirely by what you wish. I am very sorry," and tears choked her voice.

"Hush! my dearest, don't cry," said Mrs. Deshon, kissing and soothing her, as if she had been Edgar or Katie. "You are too young, and too simpleminded to have learnt to think of appear-

ances yet, that is all. Come, I shall begin to think myself quite a cross scolding old mamma if you take my words so much to heart. I am not vexed with you at all, if I seemed so for a minute it was only for what you said about Anthony; I am anxious that you should be friends with him."

"I am quite willing to be friends with him, dear mamma, particularly if you wish it; it was only that I did not think it quite generous or chivalrous of him to—"

"Chivalrous!" interrupted Mrs. Deshon, laughing; "My dear little thing, were you born in the middle ages? I sometimes fancy so, only that yours is the nineteenth century mediævalism, which I suspect is more refined than the original. Do you remember the lovely lady in the boat with the silken sail, who dropped down suddenly upon some of the round-table knights? I suppose you felt like her this afternoon, and imagined the officers to be all Sir Galahads, and Sir Percevals."

"I am sure, Papa, and Lambert, and Lewis, have knightly minds," said Gyneth.

"Papa and Lambert, yes; Lewis I am not so sure about, he is more a man of the world than you imagine."

"Oh, mamma, you wouldn't say so if you knew him as I do."

"Should I not? But, my love, I have seen a great deal of him, though not lately; and I do not mean to say anything against him, he is an extremely clever, agreeable person."

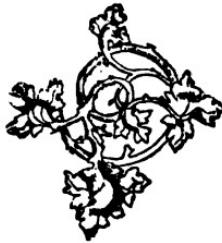
Gyneth was not satisfied with these epithets, but as coming from her mother she did not like to object to them, and Mrs. Deshon went on. "You would not have been offended if *Lewis* had made the same remarks that *Anthony* did this afternoon."

"Lewis would not have made them! You don't

know how kind he is to me always, mamma, and how considerate."

"I can fancy it, my dear," and Mrs. Deshon's brown orbs overflowed with merry mischief; "but see, there is Bertie looking disconsolate in the garden, let us go and talk to him."

She kissed her daughter again fondly, and went away smiling, but there were still tears in Gyneth's eyes.





CHAPTER XI.

"Thy work this hour is patience."

The Baptistry.

WHEN the result of the examination was made known, the Deshons found to their great disappointment that Lawrence had failed. Not discreditably though, for he had very nearly got the requisite number of marks, and had had to compete with boys considerably his seniors; in French, German, and drawing, he had shown himself proficient, but had not done so well in the all-important mathematics, and had got no marks at all for English. It had even been observed that in translating from French and German, he had made use of foreign idioms, and expressed himself altogether in a very un-English fashion, so that in fact, as Colonel Deshon despondingly remarked, his foreign education had been overdone, and he had now at sixteen to set to work to learn his native language.

The poor Colonel was very much disappointed, and could not conceal that he was so, though he reproached no one but himself, and endeavoured always to speak hopefully to Lawrence, telling him that he could try his chance again at the next examination, and that in the six intervening months he would have plenty of time to acquire a more

thorough knowledge of mathematics, and the art of English composition.

Lawrence's dark eyes looked rather gloomy for a while, and he turned down his shirt-collars, and affected a Byronic air for a few days, imagining himself an ill-used genius; but his mother soon laughed him out of this, beguiled him into playing duets with her, and weeding the garden, and confiscated "The sorrows of Werter," "Heine's Poems," and a host of other lugubrious and undesirable books, over which he was nursing his melancholy. She told him she could not account it a misfortune which left him to her six months, after their long years of separation, and was so loving to him, so gay and bright, that Gyneth at first thought she was rather pleased at his failure than otherwise. But one day, when a few friends were coming to dinner, and Gyneth had gone into her mother's room to have her hair braided, they heard the Colonel sighing as he pursued his toilette in the adjoining dressing room, and Mrs. Deshon said, "I am afraid your father feels this impending dinner-party rather tiresome, he is out of spirits about Lawrence. I wish from my heart that Lawrie could have succeeded, papa's son ought *not* to have failed!"

"But surely Lawrence *has* inherited papa's talent, mamma, it must have been because he was so young that he failed, and I should think he is sure to succeed next time," said Gyneth.

"I hope so, but papa fears he is idle, and I may tell *you*, Gyneth, that he is not quite satisfied with him in other ways. He thinks he has a speculative irreverent way of speaking of sacred things, and that he has read a great many unsuitable books, and of course he reproaches himself for having trusted him to the care of strangers, and people of different creed and opinions."

"It is a good thing that he is still so young," said Gyneth, "and don't you think it may be better for him to be at home for a while, mamma, under papa's own eye?"

"Yes, that is what I tell papa, but he does not seem to see it in that light, he never will believe in the good influence he has over his children, and he is so soon depressed. I could forgive Lawrie anything sooner than his having vexed papa, to see *him* sad is the one thing that I cannot bear."

She had been standing behind her daughter as she spoke, but at this moment she bent forward to reach a comb from the dressing-table, and for once Gyneth saw tears in those happy eyes. She did not know exactly in what way to suggest comfort, but lifted her face and kissed her mother with all her heart.

Mrs. Deshon could not be sad for long; in another minute she was full of delight at her successful arrangement of her daughter's hair. "These plaits suit your head exactly, my love," she exclaimed, "and yours is charming hair to braid, it is so long, and soft, and silky. I flatter myself no maid could have produced such a good effect."

"And I shall be sure to like your handiwork better than any maid's, mamma," said Gyneth, stepping forward to look at it in the glass. "Thank you so much for taking all this trouble with my wig."

But she was not so charmed with her braids as her mother was, and in truth preferred her own every-day style, "Locks not wide bespread, Madonna-wise on either side her head," to any more showy arrangement.

"Ah, you don't care about it, I see, but you look very nice for all that," said Mrs. Deshon smiling, "though that white muslin dressing-gown

gives you rather a ghostly appearance. Here, Edgar love," tapping lightly at the dressing-room door, "just come and see how well Gyneth looks with her hair this way."

The Colonel soon appeared in answer to this summons, and walked round Gyneth to judge of the effect, but the survey only elicited a grave "very nice, my dear, very nice indeed, but that is not your evening dress, is it?"

Mrs. Deshon clapped her little hands and laughed. "I do believe if Gyneth were to say yes, you would believe it, Edgar. I have thoughts of appearing in that mythical attire known as 'a sack tied round in the middle, and a pitcher on one's head,' to see if you will notice the difference between that and my ordinary costume."

"I know you always look like a lady, my dear," said the Colonel deprecatingly, and so saying, he vanished into the dressing-room again.

But when some time after Gyneth entered the drawing-room, her father put down his book to look at her, and gratified both wife and daughter by observing, "I am no judge of details, my little girl, but I know, you look exactly as I best like to see you."

The guests that evening were a Mr. Hetherington and his wife, who lived at a pretty little country house some miles from Harbouromouth; Captain and Mrs. Ross; a Major Morrison of Colonel Deshon's regiment; the garrison chaplain; and—as Gyneth remarked to Lambert, 'the inevitable Anthony.' There was some talk about the weather, (of course) and then about the extreme smallness of the garrison chapel, which was so insufficient in size for the congregation, that the chaplain was quite grateful to Colonel Deshon for having given up his claim to seats there for himself and family; but the chief topic of conver-

sation was the intended presentation of some new colours to the regiment, by Anthony's mother, the Countess of Eynesford.

Mrs. Hetherington thought it would be a very pretty sight, and begged to know when the day was fixed for it; Colonel Deshon hoped that she would come to the breakfast which his regiment intended to give on that occasion, and Mrs. Deshon confided to Mrs. Ross her intention of having a dance, "a little ball" in fact, that same evening.

Gyneth felt somewhat fluttered at the thought of these gaieties, but Photinée was delighted, and when the ladies retired to the drawing-room after dinner, whirled little Katie round in an extempore valse, declaring it was necessary to begin practising her steps forthwith.

"Only, dear Mrs. Deshon," she said, pausing before her hostess in an intreating attitude, "do have plenty of civilians, one gets so tired of officers; will you not ask that cousin, that clever cousin that Gyneth used to write about? I have a great curiosity to see him, he is witty, spirituel, is he not?"

"Yes, he is very amusing, but I should not have thought of asking him to come all the way from London just for our little party; however, for your especial benefit, Photinée, I will make the attempt, and I daresay Gyneth will not object, will you, my love?"

"I shall be very glad to see him, mamma," said Gyneth, candidly. "Why her cheeks were in such a flame, she could not tell.

"And then, you know, we must have some very pretty, charming young ladies," said Photinée coaxingly, "I have heard so much of the young English ladies, are there many of them as pretty as my sweet Jeannie?"

"Not to my taste," said Mrs. Deshon, "but you

must not expect a mother to be impartial. That little friend of yours, Gyneth, Miss Burnaby, I mean, is a very pleasing little thing, do you think she would come and stay a few days with us, so as to be present at our little dance?"

"Oh yes, I think she would, if Mr. Burnaby is pretty well just then, and it would be so delightful to have her, thank you for thinking of it, dear mamma."

"I'm afraid I cannot lay claim to much benevolence, my dear, for I made the proposal from rather a selfish motive, but I shall be very glad if it gives you pleasure. We will talk of it another time." For Mrs. Deshon saw that Mrs. Hetherington, who was doing the amiable to the children, had rather come to the end of her little interrogations, beginning with "How old are you, my pet?" and ending with "Which do you like best, little dogs, or little pussy-cats?" and released her from the necessity of continuing in this strain any longer, by proposing to her to take a turn on the lawn.

When, on returning to the subject the next day, Mrs. Deshon found that Gyneth really was very much gratified at the prospect of Rose's visit, she suggested that they might as well ask her for a fortnight, instead of the contemplated few days, so Gyneth wrote to ask her to come to them the following week.

Lawrence hailed the prospect of having a pretty, lively girl to stay in the house, for he was a person who liked constant variety. He was not content like Lambert with the society of his parents and sister, and was disposed to be rather extravagant in the way of amusement. He tried hard to persuade his father to buy a third riding-horse, and seemed at one time so likely to prevail, that Gyneth asked Lambert if he could not remind him

privately, that it was not right to encroach on his father's kindness, by asking for more indulgences than Colonel Deshon could properly afford.

"Papa is the best judge of whether he can afford it or not," said Lambert.

"Yes, but, Lambert, you know how unwilling papa and mamma are to refuse us anything," continued Gyneth, "and how they will sacrifice their own wishes for our pleasure or benefit; you have made Edgar see all this, could you not hint it to Lawrie? I think it would come better from you, who are several years older, than it would from me, and I'm sure you have the best right to speak, for you never ask for anything, and are only *too* self-denying."

Lambert seemed pained rather than pleased at the compliment, and answered, "I do not feel that I have a right, and it might seem like interfering, Lawrence would perhaps be offended."

"He ought not to be; and besides, it is surely cowardly to shrink from saying what might do good from fear of giving offence."

His cheeks flushed so at the word "cowardly," that she was sorry she had used it, and his reply came slowly, "Perhaps it is cowardice which makes me hate interfering, I will think over what you have said."

"I might as well have found fault with Lawrence at once, as implied blame to you, Lambert," said Gyneth, perceiving her own inconsistency, "please don't think any more about it."

But still she was rather vexed at what she considered his unreasonable timidity, it would have been all very well in a child or a girl, but a timid man! the idea was dreadful. She had a truly feminine admiration for strength, valour, and even a certain amount of confidence; the ideal heroes of her girlish stories had always been brave, and

well satisfied with his exchange of companions, though he owned it gave him a good opportunity of becoming better acquainted with Lawrence, and sometimes really got interested in their discussions on French history, and the merits of the rival poets of Germany, Goethe and Schiller.

Rose's arrival gave a pleasant little diversion to the thoughts of all; Colonel Deshon was pleased with her bright good sense, and winning manner, his wife liked the gaiety of spirit which harmonized so well with her own, Lambert admired her kindly disposition, and freedom from affectation, and Lawrence was charmed to discover that she had been more than once abroad, and could talk with him of Paris, and Bonn, Rhine scenery, German characteristics, and French cookery. Gyneth was very happy in her friend's society, and even the blunt Fanny became sociable with her directly, while Edgar claimed her as an old acquaintance, and the little one lavished on "Wosie," the kisses and coquettish graces which she had hitherto thought proper to reserve exclusively for Anthony.

What Gyneth liked best were the long, intimate talks which Rose and she had together whenever—which was not very often—they found themselves *tête-à-tête*. Rosie entered so warmly into all her hopes, and plans, and longings, was so truly and innocently grieved to hear of the wickedness and misery of the town, so full of sympathy with her disappointment at not being able to give some little help to those who needed it so much.

"I declare," Gyneth one day said, "I feel tempted sometimes to offer to help Mrs. Parry in her schemes, only I'm afraid mamma would not like it, and Bertie"—

"Would put on that little scandalised look which so amuses me," laughed Rose; "these Parrys are a sort of charitable Guerillas, are they

not? who prefer fighting against ignorance and vice in their own independent fashion, instead of enrolling themselves in the regular army, with the rector for their head. Don't be a Guerilla, Gyneth. Papa says we ought not to be self-willed in our charity any more than in anything else, and there must be a danger of becoming so when one ignores the proper authorities."

"But suppose the proper authorities won't have anything to say to you, won't take you into their army, even as a recruit, what is one to do then?"

"Not turn Guerilla! no, by no means; but do the little scraps of duties that fall in one's way, and be such a good, patient, proper, orderly little darling, that at last the general of the regular army will begin to say to himself, 'Ah, this little person has more in her than I thought; she hasn't joined the Guerillas, she knows how to be patient, and keep in her proper place, I will enlist her as a recruit forthwith.'

"Then I must live on hopes," said Gyneth, laughing, "and of course I am very young yet, and so can have no excuse for impatience; it is not as if I had been waiting a long, long time for an opportunity which never came. Besides, Rosie, if no work comes to one to do, it must be, I suppose, because one is not good enough to be fit to do it."

"That is a wholesome way of viewing the matter," answered the little Rose, with a half-arch, half-pensive air, "but now, Gyneth, tell me what is it that you would like to do if you were allowed and encouraged?"

Gyneth hesitated and picked a flower to pieces, as though embarrassed how to reply. "I don't know, Rosie, I don't indeed; but if the general took me as a recruit, of course he would tell me what to do. I thought perhaps I might have

taught in the Sunday-school, but Lambert said something to Mr. Weatherhead about it, and he said that he had sufficient teachers for the girls at present, but that one of the boys' classes was to lose its present teacher soon if I were inclined to take that."

"Then you have that to look forward to?"

"No; for papa and mamma do not wish me to undertake a boys' class, they say the Harbour-mouth boys are so rude."

Rose thought to herself that Gyneth, with her gentleness, her earnest, reverent manner, and patient temper, might very likely have acquired a stronger influence over the rude Harbour-mouth boys than would be gained by a rougher teacher, but she did not like to seem to question Colonel Deshon's judgment, and only said, "It is a good thing that the girls' school is so well provided with teachers, it shows that there must be a good many people here who take an interest in it."

"Oh, yes!" said Gyneth readily; "and if the work is done, it would be silly and egotistical to grieve because I have not the doing of it. Only in such a place as this it seems as if there must be work for every one, even for me, if it could be apportioned properly."

"Is there any garrison Sunday-school? I suppose the chaplain would be a proper authority to work under."

"No, the soldiers' children go to Mr. Weatherhead's and Mr. Gordon's Sunday-schools; there is a week-day regimental school which I have visited with mamma once or twice. We went once to hear the chaplain catechise the children, which he does every Wednesday, and once we went to help the mistress to cut out some work for them."

"And you will often go again, I daresay? Well, that is something; and then you know some of the

soldiers' wives, don't you? Is not it for one of them that you are working now?"

"Yes; at least I am making some little Sunday cloaks for her children. Poor little things! they have been kept from church and school because they have had no clothes fit to go in; there are five of them, and the father is only a private, so you may imagine how poor they are."

"What a number of little ragged children there are in those small streets near the railway station!"

"Ah, yes, but those are not soldiers' children, not anything half so respectable, and it is just such wretched little things as those that I most want to help. Miss Weatherhead told me that she had thought of getting up a working society to make clothes for the poor, something similar to Mrs. Gordon's, only rather differently regulated, but that she couldn't get enough ladies to join it."

"But are there no tradespeople's daughters who would be glad to help? Surely there are numbers of shops in the town?"

"Yes, of course; and Augusta Weatherhead said that her father did propose to ask some of the shopkeepers' daughters to join the society, but that she had persuaded him not to do so, for she didn't wish to be brought into contact with those sort of people."

"Little goose!" exclaimed Rose energetically! "why it is precisely 'those sort of people' whom one longs to unite with oneself in any little scheme for doing good. And the contact need not have been very much, for I suppose the workers were to do their share of work at their own houses, were they not?"

"Yes, I believe so, and I almost wonder Mr. Weatherhead allowed himself to be over-persuaded; but he thinks so much of Augusta's judgment, and

I don't suppose he quite understood her real reason for objecting."

"I should think not, for he would surely have despised such a silly reason as that. What did you say to her about it?"

"Not anything at first; but I suppose she saw I looked a little blank, for she added that her Aunt Clarissa had warned her not to have anything to do with shopkeepers' daughters, as they were sure to be familiar and presuming, and attempt to patronise her on account of her youth. So then I said I thought many of them must surely have too much right feeling to do that; but she seemed incredulous, and I didn't like to say any more."

"Did you tell your brother Lambert all this?"

"Yes; but he only said, 'Poor little girl!' How Lewis would laugh at such fine ladyism, wouldn't he? It is just what he most despises."

"Yes, indeed. I was going to say Miss Weatherhead was not worthy to be a clergyman's daughter if she had such absurd notions; but perhaps we ought to imitate your brother's charity, and only say, 'Poor little girl!'"

"But sometimes one enjoys hearing a little bit of hearty indignation."

"Such as Mr. Grantham prefaces with, 'Now I am going to be particularly uncharitable,' yes, it is great fun, especially as he is really in a perfectly good humour all the time. But I think I like his bits of hearty admiration best, particularly"—and there she stopped.

Gyneth looked at her, and, much to her surprise, the Rose grew rosier beneath her gaze. She soon recovered herself and went on talking; but the subject of Mr. Grantham's peculiarities was not renewed.



CHAPTER XII,

" 'Tis summer, joyous summer-time !
In noisy towns no more abide ;
The earth is full of radiant things,
Of gleaming flowers and glancing wings,
Beauty and joy on every side.
When noon is in the flaming sky,
Seek we some shadowy, silent wood,
Recline upon a mossy knoll ;
Cast care aside, and yield the soul
To that luxurious quietude."

MARY HOWITT.

HE 2nd of August was Gyneth's birthday, and Mrs. Deshon was determined that it should be quite a gala day, though as Colonel Deshon had accepted for her and himself an invitation to dine with the Governor of Harbourmouth that very evening, she could not take part in the home festivities. Several plans of amusement were proposed, but at last it was agreed that Gyneth and her brothers, together with Rose and Fanny, should go in a boat across the harbour to a little village, in the church of which were several very curious old brasses; that they should have a picnic dinner and tea in a wood adjoining the village; and should row back

again in the cool of the evening, arriving at home in time for supper.

The morning rose gloriously fine, and the wavelets danced in golden sheen around the boat that conveyed the merry party to their destination. A fresh buoyant wind came from seaward, leaving a transitory bloom on Gyneth's cheek, and making her look for the time being as bright and healthful a young damsel as any one could wish to see. She sat leaning over the side of the boat, one little hand dipping in the water, for the childish pleasure of feeling the waves rush against it, while the other was taken possession of by Edgar, who was seated between her and Lambert. On one of her fingers was a ring, a birthday gift from her father and mother, and by no means the only present which she had received that morning,—for the arrival of a beautifully illustrated edition of Tennyson's poems had testified to Mr. Grantham's remembrance of his little cousin's tastes, and from the grandmamma had come not one but many gifts: books, and things of various sorts, chosen with loving care, as likely to be useful to her child. The letters which had accompanied these were safe in Gyneth's pocket at that moment, too pleasant to be parted with, though Lewis's was only a hurried scrawl which ran thus:—

“DEAR GYNETH,—I really have not time to write a respectable letter, but lest my little philosopher should imagine that I have forgotten her birthday I must dash off a few lines. I do not know whether granny gives reliable reports of herself, but at any rate you will be glad to hear that I thought her looking well when I was with her last Sunday. Since you left her, however, she has taken up an affectation of age which is painful to my feelings, and has invested in a pair of spec-

tacles, which she by no means requires, and a bonnet of inconceivable magnitude which she informs me is 'the proper thing for an old woman!' I object strongly, but my influence is nothing when it has not yours to support it. When are you coming back to us? Tell Edgar my friend's Crystal Palace excursion came off with great success, some weeks ago, and the school-children were as fascinated with the various monsters there as he could have been. I hear you have transplanted the Rose to Harbournouth for a little while; remember me to her, and give my love to all the family. I need not tell you that I shared your disappointment about Lawrence, we will hope for better success next time.

"If Lambert does not write to me soon, I shall denounce him as an idle boy. How do you mean to spend your birthday, I wonder? you will be very happy, I hope, and believe, and perhaps may feel less like the lugubrious Lord Ronald at eighteen than you did at seventeen. Child, how young you are still!

"Your affectionate cousin,
"LEWIS F. GRANTHAM."

"Do you think," said Gyneth, looking up with a radiant smile, "that papa would spare me to go home with Rose, and spend a few days with grand-mamma, Bertie?"

"Already!" said Lambert, smiling too, though in a different way.

"No, no, Gyneth," said Lawrence, "assuredly no. What is to become of me if you and Miss Burnaby both desert me at the same time? I shall expire of ennui."

"Not at all," laughed Rose; "you will then bestow all your energies on mathematics, recreating yourself occasionally by sitting down quietly

to meditate, and ‘evolve’ something or other from the depths of your moral consciousness, after the fashion of the German described in Friends in Council.”

“No, that will not be possible to me. I shall be sighing and singing, ‘O komm, Geliebte, mir zurück,’ with variations, deprived even of the consolation of my meerschaum, which the Herr Papa has so unmercifully proscribed.”

“Poor fellow,” said Gyneth, patting his head caressingly as he leant towards her with a would-be piteous air, “you must forget all your troubles actual and possible for to-day; and see, there is the church spire peeping through the trees, so we shall soon be at our destination.”

They had but a little way to walk after they had landed, before they reached the church, but the sexton, who had possession of the key, lived further on, and Lambert volunteered to go and fetch it, while the rest of the party seated themselves on some felled trees, which were lying near the churchyard gate.

But ere he had gone a few steps Gyneth sprang after him.

“Bertie, let me go with you. Do you like this? Are you glad we came?” And she looked up at the grey, ivy-mantled church, and the green trees that bordered their path, as if she found it a pleasant change from the bare Harbournouth common, with its modern-looking buildings.”

“Yes, I like it very much; I am only afraid that Miss Burnaby, and Lawrence, and Fanny, will find it dull.”

“Rose won’t, I’m sure; she likes quiet pleasures much better than you imagine. If Fanny and Lawrie are bored I can’t help it. I wanted to do something that you would like, Bertie.”

“Thank you,” he said warmly.

They walked on a little way without speaking, then Gyneth said, "I want to consult you; among her other gifts dear grandmamma has sent me five pounds to do as I like with; what would you advise me to do with it? or with part of it?"

"In what way?"

"Oh! don't you know? I thought you would have guessed; I mean what good can I do with it?"

He hesitated so before replying, that in a spirit of mischief she suggested, "Suppose I give it to Mrs. Parry to buy clothes for the Cannibal Islanders."

He looked at her wonderingly, and she hastened to add, "No, that is only nonsense, of course. I do really want your advice, Bertie."

"Mr. Weatherhead is going to establish a night-school, and he wants money very much for that, I know. He talks of commencing it on the first of October, if he can get funds sufficient,—perhaps you would like to contribute something towards it? If not, and nothing special comes before you, there is always the offertory, and that seems one of the best ways of giving, because it is so—"

"Unobtrusive," finished Gyneth. "Yes, I have felt that, but I think I should like to give something towards the night-school. Thank you for telling me of it."

"Oh, I had meant to tell you in any case, I thought you would be pleased to hear of it."

"I am, indeed, it is quite birthday news. What a pity you are going back to Cambridge, Lambert, you might have become a teacher."

"I daresay they will do very well without me; and besides, I am not sure that papa and mamma would have approved. They like us to be all together in the evening."

"Oh! but I am sure they would have consented if they had found you really wished it: I wish

I were a boy, then they would let *me* do something."

As Lambert did not answer she looked up at him, and continued, "Bertie, I see you think me one of the 'Mrs. Pardiggle' class, more anxious to put myself forward, than that good should be done. I am so stupid, I always vibrate between feverish energy and languid do-nothingness, and now I begin to feel the do-nothing fit coming on, and so am clinging more desperately to the remains of my energy."

"Can't you strike the golden mean?" said Lambert, smiling.

She shook her head. "I wish I could, but it is hard to determine what the golden mean *is*. Mamma thinks me too languid even now. I *can't* be eager and interested about flounces and things of that sort!"

"Is it necessary that you should be?"

"That is what I want to know; mamma has been devising a dress for me to wear at our party, it is to be particularly charming, and I am to be excessively delighted with it, of course, but I know I shan't be."

"Do you think it too gay?"

"Yes, for me; I shall look like the jay in peacock's plumes; and—Lewis will be sure to laugh at me!"

"Why should you think so? I dare say he will never notice it at all," suggested Lambert, consolingly; but it must be confessed that Gyneth was not so comforted by this idea as she ought to have been.

"Lewis is a person who *does* notice ladies' dress," she said, in a constrained tone. "Is this the sexton's cottage we are coming to? What a picturesque little well that is at the side."

The sexton, a small, sharp old man, a cobbler by

profession, accompanied them back to the church, descanting on the beauty and antiquity of the brasses which they wished to see. "And what I tell my wife," he garrulously continued, "is, that if the custom had been kept up of having these brasses for monuments, people's dress would have continued more sensible-like than it is at present. For see what a silly figure a lady, now-a-days, would cut, with her flounces and her cramboline,—asking your pardon, miss,—depicted on her tombstone!"

"What a pity mamma isn't here," whispered Gyneth, much amused. "Think of my finding an advocate for my views on dress, just at this moment; he must have divined our previous conversation."

But when they arrived at the church, and she was called upon to admire a brass which represented a lady with an immense half-moon-shaped excrescence, fastened on each side of her head, and under which all vestige of hair was carefully stowed away, she felt a little disposed to doubt the justice of the old sexton's commendations of the sensible-like costume of mediæval times.

Lawrence seemed rather inclined to make merry with these and other peculiarities of the quaintly-coiffured dame, and her seven equally quaint daughters, whose hands for ever clasped, as if in ceaseless prayer, awakened widely different thoughts in the reverent mind of little Edgar.

"Is that to show how good they were?" he said, pointing them out to his eldest brother, who had already begun to take the impression of another brass, representing a steel-clad warrior. "Lawrie shouldn't laugh at them, should he?"

"No!" and Lambert's blue eyes were lifted with a look of surprise, too gentle for reproach, to Lawrence's mocking face. "Stay by me, Eddie, and

I will show you how to rub part of this knight's armour. I can't trust you to do the head, since this is your first attempt."

Gyneth and Rose soon covered the lady and her seven daughters with paper, and Lawrence retreated into the churchyard and lay down on the grass, requesting them to call him when they got as far as the half-moons, as he wished to see that they "took that highly important part of the impression properly." He professed to be going to sleep, but looked so ennuied, that Gyneth presently went out to him, and coaxed him into commencing a sketch of the exterior of the church, which he admitted to be "passablement jolie." Fanny sat down near him, to study a ponderous "History of Architecture," which she had insisted on bringing with her, and in which she soon became so much engrossed, that the conversation which Lawrence at first tried to keep up with her, deteriorated into a sort of "cross questions and crooked answers."

Those within the church were almost absolutely silent, and extremely diligent; but after a while Gyneth's hand became so tired that she proposed to rest for a time, and after going round the church together, examining whatever seemed worthy of remark, the two girls wandered out into the church-yard, and sat down on a stile a little way off from Lawrence and Fanny. On the other side of the stile was a field, where some sheep were grazing, and the tinkling of the sheep-bell pleasantly filled the pauses in the young girls' talk.

"I like those old brasses, don't you, Rosie?" said Gyneth, thoughtfully; "quaint as they are, there is something very solemn and touching in the speechless intercession of those clasped hands."

"Yes, and don't you remember how fond you

were of that carved stone figure of a lady in the abbey church at Malvern? What a pleasant time that was that you spent with us there! I should like to go there again; shouldn't you?"

"Very much; I have got the sketch you made for me of that kneeling lady still; stiff and ungraceful as her dress, especially the ruff, makes her look, I have a great affection for her."

"I know you have, and you wrote a story about her, or at least a story suggested by her monument; and you promised to show it to me, and never did, you naughty thing!"

"Ah, I have got it somewhere, but I don't know whether I can find it for you; it is about a lady in olden times, who had one son, a very bad, worldly sort of man, whom yet she loved very much, and she did all in her power to win him over to be good, and prayed for him night and day, but at last when he was absent she fell ill and died. And when she was dying she commanded her attendants to have a stone figure of her, kneeling, and with hands clasped, placed on her tomb, where her son might see it, if ever he came there. So this was done, and after a time her son came from France, where he had been spending his days among gay, irreligious companions, and he came down to the place where his mother had lived, to settle some money business. When this was done, he was going back to France again, but the evening before he started it occurred to him that he should like to see his mother's monument for once, so he got the key of the church and went in. It was a moonlight evening, but just as he entered the church a cloud obscured the moon, so that at first it was so dark he could scarcely see where the monument was; but suddenly the moon shone out again, a great flood of silver light came down the nave, and there was his

mother, a white, still figure, ‘luminous, ghost-like, death-like,’ with bended knees, and hands clasped in prayer, interceding for him it seemed, as she had so often done in life. He had expected only to see a common slab with name and date, and the unlooked-for vision melted him into sudden grief and awe. For the first time for many years, he too knelt and prayed, and that prayer was the beginning of a new and better life.”

“What a pity it is only a story,” said Rose, “it sounds as if it might have been true. And so the sight of the kneeling stone lady at Malvern suggested all that to you. Why do you never write anything now, Gyneth? I haven’t seen you write anything more than a letter since I have been with you.”

“No, grandmamma warned me against giving myself up to story-writing, she said that in my home, among my brothers and sisters, I should find plenty to do, and that I must not let myself be engrossed by fictitious interests when I ought to be alive to all that might be passing around me. So I have obeyed her and not written anything, but sometimes I feel a sort of hunger after my old pursuits.”

“I daresay, and I don’t think Mrs. Deshon can have meant you to sacrifice your tastes so entirely. I should fancy it was moderation and not total abstinence that she meant to recommend. Have you ever shown your eldest brother any of your stories?”

“Bertie! no indeed, he would think them too silly to be worth the trouble of reading.”

“I should make him read them,” said Rose, with a funny little nod of her head; “if I were you I should never rest till I had beguiled him into sharing my pursuits with me, and letting me share his; he is too lonely and too reserved, Mr. Grant-

ham said so the other day, adding that he hoped you would draw him out."

"I am not sure that even Lewis himself could do that, I want very much to see them together, Lewis is so excessively fond of Bertie."

"Yes, you would have liked to have heard Mr. Grantham and Mr. Willis talking of him one evening at our house."

"Ah, that reminds me," said Gyneth, "how is Mr. Willis? does he still remind you of Chaucer's prioress."

Rose laughed, "I was very naughty that day, wasn't I, Gyneth? The poor man had a cold just then, I believe, it was not fair to judge so hastily; Mr. Grantham likes his voice and manner in church very much."

There was nothing in the words, but Rose's deepening bloom and hurried manner again struck Gyneth with surprise.

"Shall we go back to our work, Rosie?" she said, and they left the stile and re-entered the church. At about three o'clock Lawrence came to the door, and called Gyneth out, showed his finished sketch, and declared himself to be famishing.

"Poor boy!" she exclaimed, "is it really so late? There is a most charming wood behind the sexton's cottage; we had better adjourn at once, and prepare our meal. I am afraid poor Eddie must be very hungry."

"Not he; his dear old coddle of a tutor in there took care he should not be, he brought a small multitude of biscuits in his pocket for him, and sent him out here to eat them, while you were sitting on the stile."

"Bertie thinks of everything!" exclaimed Gyneth, admiringly, "and I, unnatural sister that I am, was for letting you all starve! Let us make

haste with our preparations now. Where are the baskets?"

"Under that tree there, and I hope, Gyneth, that they contain something really *appétissant*; as for Fanny, she is going to make her dinner off string-course mouldings, and dog-tooth ornaments, for that great architectural book was all she chose to carry."

"She counts on sharing with me," said Gyneth, taking up a basket of very promising size and weight; and summoning Rose and her brothers to join her, she set off for the wood.

Rose entered warmly into the fun of laying out the sylvan repast, and flitted about like a veritable wood-sprite, ably assisted by all but Lawrence, who declined to bestir himself till the viands had been unpacked, when with the laughing quotation, "'So when everything was ready, down came the Trolls, some had long noses, and some had short, and some had no noses at all, and they ate, and they drank, and they tasted everything,'" he took his seat beside the mossy table, and proceeded to help himself and everybody else to the good things which Mrs. Deshon's care had provided for them.

Gyneth jestingly regretted that she had no "sauer kraut" to offer him, and a little good-natured teasing followed on his avowal that he had made his mother promise to provide an "omelette aux herbes fines" for his supper, but he condescended to pronounce the pic-nic fare very good, and declared he should make a note of the wonderful fact that nothing had been forgotten, not even the salt!

Edgar was enraptured by the sight of a little shy squirrel, who peeped at them for some time through the branches of an overhanging tree, and then, alarmed at being noticed, darted off oh, so swiftly, so friskily, and ensconced himself in the

furthest recesses of the wood ; and Gyneth found an inexpressible pleasure in watching the sunlight flicker through the green leaves overhead, and in listening to the soft low rustle of the summer breeze, as it stirred the heavy foliage of the elms, and wooed into tremulous motion the delicate fronds of the ferns.

Rose insisted on decorating her friend's hat with fern-leaves and different kinds of feathery grasses, and the girls and Lawrence spent the rest of the afternoon in rambling through the wood, while Lambert and Edgar went back to the brasses.

A sort of primitive tea was supplied by the sexton's wife at about seven o'clock, and after this the little party set off on their journey home.

It was moonlight, not sunlight, which glistened on the waters now, and the waves were silvery, and the shores looked dim and distant, and the bright, still heavens seemed near. Gyneth had Rose next to her now, and sure of her sympathy, ventured to quote those beautiful lines from the "Baptistery,"

"The heavens do in thy bosom sleep,
In their immensity,
With hosts that range th' ethereal deep,
Dark bosom'd, glorious sea !
And there the moon in deeps of light
Doth make herself a glorious place,
While, through the mantle of the night,
Glass'd in thy watery world the heavens behold their face."

She said no more aloud, but thought over in her mind the whole noble poem, echoing with full heart the last verse,

"Types of Baptismal blessings ever winding,
Ye my sad weary ways at every turn are finding,
With sounds as of celestial dew,
On streams that come to view,

Bear me, great flowing fountains, bear me still
Upon your heaving breast ;
Bear me yet onward to th' eternal hill,
Where I at length may rest!"

The craving for rest, the weariness of life and life's work, of which she had spoken to Lewis, still at times possessed her, though at other times a fresh, healthful fount of hope and gladness welled up within her. She combated these fits of faint-heartedness manfully, praying for strength and patience, owning herself not as yet meet for that rest which it needs the wings of a dove to attain to. "By two wings," says the author of the "Imitation," "a man is lifted up from things earthly; namely, by simplicity and purity :" and when those wings are ours we may "flee away," but not before.





CHAPTER XIII.

"Take thy banner ! may it wave
Proudly o'er the good and brave."

LONGFELLOW.

AS Lady Eynesford wished to present the colours to her son's regiment in person, it was necessary that she should come to Harbournouth, and the De shons accordingly invited her to take up her quarters at their house for a day or two. Lady Grace had gone to the Highlands with her brother Lord Eynesford and her married sister; so the countess arrived at Harbournouth with no other companions than her maid, and her pet dog, which strange to say, was not a black silky spaniel, nor a fat white poodle, but an immense bloodhound, very handsome and very stately, but so fierce of aspect as to be the terror of poor little Edgar's life so long as it remained in the house. It had belonged to the late lord, and since his death his widow had taken it into peculiar favour, so much so that Anthony jealously observed, "Emperor" had usurped the privileges of the youngest son.

But Lady Eynesford by no means limited her affections to her dog, she was passionately fond of her children, and so large-hearted in her sympathies and interests that Anthony declared he could

never come near her without being obliged to hear a pitiful story of some "Polish beggar or runaway nigger," whom she had taken under her protection. Laugh as he might about it however, he lent a more dutious ear to such tales than either his brother or sisters, and for this and other reasons had become an especial favourite with his mother, so that it was at the cost of some self-sacrifice that she had allowed him to enter the army. Not even to keep him near her though, would she consent to his entering the guards; if he were to be a soldier at all, he should be a real hardworking one, join a "marching regiment," and take his chance of bad climates and bad quarters with the rest. There were other "bad" things however to which she could not so easily reconcile herself to exposing him, and it had been an immense relief to her to consign him to Colonel Deshon's guardianship, and to receive from Mrs. Deshon a promise that she would watch over him "as if he were a son of her own."

She knew from Anthony's report that this promise had been well kept, but still she was glad of an opportunity to see with her own eyes how her darling was treated, and it was in the best of spirits and humours that she arrived at Harbournouth, and took up her temporary abode in her cousin's house. She had a tall fine figure, and her strongly-marked and rather plain features were softened in effect by the silvery-whiteness of her hair which she disdained to conceal by any artificial means, her forehead was as high as her son's was low, and her dark, bright, wonderfully-intelligent eyes seemed to bespeak so much mental power that Gyneth decided immediately Anthony's slender intellect must have been derived from his father, contrary to the usual rule of sons inheriting their mothers' qualities.

Gyneth had not much expected to like Lady Eynesford, but ere she had been one whole evening in her company she owned to Rose that she *did* like her heartily. It was a great point in her favour that she had professed indifference to light popular music, and requested Gyneth to play to her "something of Beethoven's," moreover she had once had Mendelssohn to stay in her house, and spoke with rapture of his compositions, and though she declared he was "caricatured" in the "Seraphael" of Gyneth's favourite "Charles Aucchester," she owned to having read the book with interest, and did not think Gyneth silly for admiring it. She on her part was amused and pleased by her little cousin's musical enthusiasm, though rather astonished at finding how decided were the tastes and opinions of this maiden of eighteen. "Grace is three years older, but she has not half so many 'idées fixes,'" she observed confidentially to Mrs. Deshon.

The mother smiled as she answered, "Gyneth is such a quaint old-fashioned little thing in some of her ways and words, that she often surprises me, but I assure you she is not one of those tiresome people who insist upon having ideas upon *everything*. The very name of music makes her eloquent, but on many subjects she is absolutely mute."

"Ah that is a comfort; it is a great pity when girls get a habit of laying down the law about everything like my son-in-law's sisters, who have opinions on every possible subject, from the Nebula hypothesis, down to the costume of a charity child. They have been staying a month with me in the country, and they seemed to me to pass their lives in contradicting and suggesting: they wanted me to alter the dress of my 'Blue School,' as I call it, and recommended a new set of chants

for use in our village Church ; every day they had some fresh suggestion to make, and my only comfort was in reflecting that they were not *my* daughters."

Mrs. Deshon's thoughts flew back to the last time she had seen Lady Grace, whom she remembered as a cold, handsome, inanimate girl, vouchsafing no sign of interest in anything, never taking the trouble to contradict, or expressing more than a languid acquiescence ; and perhaps she thought that even the tormentingly opinionated young ladies whom the countess described, would be preferable as daughters to any one so icily indifferent. But she quite understood Lady Eynesford's complaint, for she knew that like many other clever decided people, the old lady was a little arbitrary, and could much better tolerate indifference than opposition. Very unlike in this to Mrs. Deshon herself, who could "agree to differ" with the best grace in the world, and was rather amused than disconcerted when her views met with opposition even from her own children.

Lewis Grantham was written to, and promised to come down early enough to see the colours presented, and remain till the next day that he might assist at Mrs. Deshon's party. He had not arrived however, half an hour before the ceremony was to take place, and fearing he would be late, Mrs. Deshon, who had an errand in Harbournouth, drove to meet him at the station, and brought him home with her.

Gyneth was standing near the open window of the drawing-room, talking to Lady Eynesford, when her mother and cousin came up the steps, and in the momentary pause which ensued before the hall door was opened, she heard her mother say, "I hope she may remain fancy-free for some time to come, she is too young to know her own

mind yet," to which Lewis answered "yes," in a tone of grave acquiescence.

He was looking a little worried when he entered, but the good-tempered mouth relaxed into a smile directly he spoke, and he greeted Rose, who was standing nearest the door, with evident warmth and pleasure. To Gyneth who knew every shade of his manner, his greeting to herself seemed colder and more formal than usual ; had she done anything to vex him, she wondered, could he possibly be annoyed with his little philosopher ?

There was no time for cogitations on this, or any other matter, for Colonel Deshon sent an orderly at this moment to tell them that all was in readiness, and the whole party proceeded to the scene of action. A velvet-covered dais had been prepared on the middle of the common, and around it the troops were drawn up in review order ; beyond stretched the long extent of beach and the blue waters of the harbour, specked here and there by the white sails of a ship. The old flags that had seen so many battles, were borne honourably aloft for the last time ; tattered fragments as they were, they symbolised England's victorious arms, and were worthy of this farewell reverence. The band could not do less than bid adieu to them musically, with the tune of "Auld lang syne."

Then the new flags were brought forward, and laid on the drums in front of the dais, escorted by a small party of colour sergeants, and followed by Lady Eynesford, Mrs. Deshon, and a number of friends and acquaintances. After a prayer of consecration had been said by the chaplain, the countess took the colours, and presented them to Colonel Deshon on behalf of the regiment, with a few appropriate words. Very stately she looked, very clear and firm were the tones of her voice, very ardent the fire of her still brilliant

eyes ; her father had fallen at Waterloo,—her only brother had brought away honourable wounds from the campaign in the Punjab,—she had made her son a soldier,—no wonder then that she had her share of military enthusiasm.

Gyneth listened with intent admiration to every word of her father's reply ; how dignified he looked ! how calm and handsome ! his scarlet uniform making him appear quite enough a soldier, while he was even more evidently a gentleman, noble, and gentle, and knightly-minded, as every true gentleman should be. Another moment, and he had passed on the colours to two ensigns, who knelt to receive them, and then lifted them proudly, rising to their feet at the same instant. Everyone looked at them as they were carried past, admired them as a matter of course, and pitied the youthful ensigns who had to support their weight. Little Katie clapped her hands at the gorgeous beauty of these "bran-new" silken banners, Fanny was audibly quoting Longfellow, Gyneth's eyes followed the *old* flags regretfully.

"I can't help feeling that old friends are best," she said in a low voice.

"Always ?" inquired Lewis smiling, "even when the old friends are worn out, and faded, and almost useless ?"

"Yes, even then," she answered.

"What a staunch little lady it is !" he exclaimed half mockingly, "do you hold the same opinion, Miss Burnaby ?"

"I think all friends are good," said Rose, with one of those pretty looks that help out nothing-particular speeches so wonderfully, and a little badinage ensued between her and Mr. Grantham, to which Gyneth listened amused, without taking part in it.

Gyneth had expected to find the *dîjeuner* which

followed very dull, and was rather relieved when she found herself placed between her cousin Lewis and Captain Ross, with goodnatured Mr. Armstrong opposite. The latter gentleman was "very kind," Gyneth thought; "quite devoted" Captain Ross told his wife afterwards; "detestably officious" Lewis grumbled to himself.

Mr. Parry was there with a shade of additional solemnity on his boyish face, and muttered something about "all being vanity," in answer to Gyneth's comment on everything having passed off so well. His wife, on the contrary, had a most smiling countenance, and was victimizing Lambert by an account of Mr. Spurgeon's sayings and doings, interspersed with little insinuations against "Romish tendencies," and delivered with the indispensable giggles which Gyneth thought so aggravating. Lewis and she kept a rather mischievous watch on poor Bertie's patient face, and Mr. Grantham's eyebrows became at length so expressive, that a demurely roguish look was telegraphed back from under Lambert's eyelashes, succeeded however by a blush and renewed attention to Mrs. Parry by way of penance.

"Bertie, I have in my eye a sixpenny 'Life of Spurgeon,' which I shall have great pleasure in obtaining for you, since you are so much interested in the subject," said Lewis maliciously, when all the speeches had been made, the champagne and good things in general discussed, and the company rose from table.

"Have you made an engagement to go to hear him this evening, instead of joining the 'light fantastic?'" inquired Captain Ross. "I am told he is now at Harbourmouth."

"I have a prior engagement," replied Lambert smiling, and offering his arm to Rose, "Miss Burnaby has promised me the first set of Lancers."

Mr. Armstrong took this opportunity of requesting the same favour from Gyneth, a request which she accepted as a matter of course, though it was the occasion of a lugubrious shake of the head from Mr. Parry, who had drawn near in time to hear the last words, and favoured her with the *sotto voce* remark, "I should not have thought, Miss Deshon, that *your* mind could be satisfied with such frivolities."

Her bright look of amusement was not the only answer he received; Mrs. Deshon's quick ears caught the remark, as she passed by on the arm of the Governor of Harbournouth, and she turned back to say playfully, "A reproof and a compliment so disguised in one another as to make both palatable! Mr. Parry, you are positively becoming quite Jesuitical!"

His look of innocent surprise and horror was curious to behold, he drew back and let the party pass on, without attempting any reply, for strange to say, he was rather afraid of Mrs. Deshon, whom most people thought so goodnatured. Lambert had pity on his discomfited face, and turned back as soon as he had handed Rose into the carriage, which was waiting at the door. "Parry, I have been thinking that perhaps my cousin can tell you what you want to know about the 'shoeblack brigade,' he got a boy into it once, a poor miserable little fellow whom he met with in the streets. If you can wait one minute I'll introduce him to you; I see Major Willis is taking care of Mrs. Parry."

Mr. Parry's solemn face brightened a little, as it always did when any charitable work was in prospect, and it was an agreeable surprise to find that Mr. Grantham, whom he had (very groundlessly) set down as "worldly," was quite learned on the subject of the picturesque little London shoeblacks, and quite ready to be interested in

the scheme for getting up a similar corps in Harbournouth.

"It might rescue some poor lads from a life of wretchedness and crime," said poor good Mr. Parry with a deep sigh.

"What does the rector think of it?" inquired Mr. Grantham, and Lambert's eyes thanked him as he replied, "I don't think the scheme has been submitted to him yet, for it has been hitherto only an undeveloped idea, but of course he must be consulted before any actual steps are taken."

"I suppose so," said Mr. Parry resignedly, "I only hope we shan't have to endure any bigoted opposition from him."

Lambert looked pained, but said nothing; Mr. Grantham observed with a smile, "So far as my experience of clergymen goes, I should say that they are very glad when they can get any layman to work with them for the good of their parish; those who ignore them, and set up independent charities, take the very way to create the opposition they condemn."

"I shouldn't mind if the rector was a safe person," began Mr. Parry.

"He doesn't bite, does he?" inquired Mr. Grantham of Lambert, in a sort of aside.

"But you see," continued the young officer lugubriously, "he's taken up with all these new-fangled notions; I shouldn't be in the least surprised if he insisted on all the boys learning the Church Catechism!"

Lewis laughed, he couldn't help it. "I always imagined the Church Catechism dated from the sixteenth century," he said, "possibly I may have been under a delusion, but at any rate I should think it rather a matter of congratulation, if all the little shoeblacks knew their 'duty to their neighbour' by heart."

"Yes, of course," said Mr. Parry, with a very wise air, "but knowledge is not faith."

There was no answer to be made to such a truism, and Lewis bethought him of an engagement to ride with Colonel Deshon.

"Good-bye, Parry," said Lambert, "I shall hear from you, shall I not? if Mr. Weatherhead approves your scheme. I am quite sure you will not find him 'bigoted.'"

"Ah, we shall see," was the reply; "good-bye, my dear fellow, I ought I suppose to hope that you may enjoy your dissipation this evening, but I can't conscientiously do so."

"It isn't expected of you," said Lambert with a smile, and the two cousins hurried away.

"What a funny specimen of goodness and silliness!" exclaimed Lewis, "I should think conscientiousness and self-esteem were his most prominent organs, with a striking deficiency in veneration and ideality. I was rather hoping to see a pitched battle between you and him, Bertie, on the subject of your rector and 'bigotry' in general."

"Combativeness is not one of my 'organs,'" said Bertie, "Gyneth is often vexed at my want of pluck."

"Gyneth! does that gentle little thing pretend to like strife? I know she is a famous little champion when once she enters the lists, but I thought she could with difficulty be provoked into doing so."

"She doesn't like quarrels at all, but I think she likes friendly argument. How clever she is, Lewis! she far outstrips the rest of us, even Lawrence is not half so talented."

"Ah you have found that out," said Mr. Grantham delightedly. "I thought you would appreciate her, Bertie, and I suppose you are immense friends."

"I don't know," hesitated Lambert, "I daresay she finds me stupid. Of course she is a good deal occupied with mamma and the children, and at other times Lawrence claims her; it is not only I who appreciate her."

"But, you foolish boy," began Mr. Grantham, in a tone of remonstrance, which was suddenly exchanged for one of pleasure as he added, "I must finish my lecture another time, for there is the little Rose ready mounted, so I suppose your father must be ready too; if you will excuse me, Bertie, I will hurry on to join them."

He dashed open the garden gate and hurried up the gravelled sweep leading to the house, at a pace which the younger cousin could not emulate: he had a motive for this haste.

Colonel Deshon had ridden round to the library window to give some farewell charge to his wife, and Rose, who was riding a horse of Anthony's, was for the moment quite alone.

"The very opportunity I have been waiting for," said Mr. Grantham, as he joined her; "here is your ring, I hope it will fit now." He held out a ring-case to her as he spoke, and she drew from it a small hoop of rubies and pearls, which, pulling off her glove, she slipped on to the third finger of her left hand.

"Oh, it fits beautifully now," she said, "thank you so much for bringing it, I have not felt comfortable without it, though I have been wearing one or two other rings on that finger to Gyneth's great astonishment. I wish I might tell her."

"Ah, you have not leave, you must be patient a little longer."

Something else he said, which she leant downwards to hear, somewhat to the astonishment of Gyneth, who came to the hall door at that moment ready equipped for a drive, which she was going to

take with Lady Eynesford. Her surprised glance took in in one moment the pretty graceful figure bending from the saddle, the little picturesque head, with its bright hair crowned by the coquettish hat and feather, the fair, sweet, smiling face with its deepened bloom ; and then that other face upturned to it, so refined, and intelligent, and manly, with those bright, keen, unfathomable eyes, and that half-sarcastic half-pleasant smile about the finely chiselled mouth. What could those two have to say to one another that required so confidential a tone and attitude ?

Her first impulse was to draw back, but Mr. Grantham saw her and stopped her. "Gyneth, can you tell me where I can find the steed I was promised ? and is your father ready ? Lambert entrapped me into a discussion on shoeblacks with Mr. Parry, and nearly made me forget my appointment."

"Your horse is all ready in the stable, papa thought you were not coming, and was just going to start without you. Bertie," to Lambert who had just come up, "will you tell Dawson to send round Timour ? I am afraid you will find him rather a restive creature, Lewis, but papa says he is not really vicious."

"I hope not, for 'I like them very tame,' as the cockney said, when he was asked what was his favourite style of horse. Why don't you ride, Gyneth ? Haven't you learnt yet ?"

"No, not yet, and it would not be much use, for we have only two riding-horses ; that one Rose is on is Anthony's, isn't it a handsome creature ?"

"Very, but I wish you rode, Gyneth, I think it would do you good, give you a little colour, you look so very pale to-day."

"'Pale as crocus grows close beside a rosetree's root,'" quoted Gyneth with a glance at her bloom-

ing little friend, and a playful intonation, which yet had in it a trifle of bitterness.

"Don't suggest such a thing," said Mr. Grantham, laughing, "one invariably thinks of a *yellow* crocus, the emblem of jealousy too."

"The emblem of jealousy," did he mean that as a hint? A crimson glow reddened poor Gyneth's white cheeks, she had been jealous of Lambert once, was she jealous of Rose now? She shrank abashed at the idea of such meanness in herself.

Colonel Deshon and the groom leading Timour appeared together, and Lawrence followed, mounted on Anthony's chestnut; Anthony was going to drive in order to be with his mother, so had goodnaturedly offered his cousins the use of his horses.

If Mr. Grantham 'liked them tame' he still certainly appeared by no means dissatisfied with the mettlesome creature he was called upon to mount, though that operation had to be performed under difficulties, as Timour had not the smallest notion of standing quiet. The groom's 'so hos' and other pacific exclamations were quite thrown away, Lambert's voice was the only thing which had the slightest effect.

"Are you going to be of the driving party, Bertie?" inquired Lewis before he rode off; "I had hoped to see *you* on the chestnut."

"No, mamma has engaged me as her aide-de-camp this afternoon, she has some preparations to make for the party this evening."

"I should have thought that was feminine business."

"Not altogether, something of the neuter gender is wanted on these occasions, to do whatever comes to hand whether man's or woman's work."

"And you are going to be 'it' for the nonce; well, you are certainly the most dutiful of sons.

Good-bye, *au revoir*, but don't be surprised if I come home smashed, for this animal appears likely to be the death of me."

"Lewis doesn't ride so well as you, Bertie," said Gyneth, looking after him as he put his horse into a canter, "I fancy he is out of practice."

"He hasn't had my father's teaching," said Lambert, "that *ought* to make a good horseman of any one. Miss Burnaby must have been well taught, she rides capitally, indeed she does everything well."

"Yes, her grace and skill are innate," said Gyneth, readily. Lambert's evident admiration of Rose did not cost her the least pang of jealousy. She was proud of *his* liking for her friend.

The carriage came round to the door at this moment, so she went back into the drawing-room to summon Lady Eynesford, who was reading aloud to her son a grateful epistle from a poor Frenchman, who had been exiled from France for his Legitimist opinions, and for whom she had obtained some employment in England. Reading letters was a very favourite occupation with the Countess, who never worked, and would read no books but such as were particularly clever and well-written. Katie accompanied the driving party by special request from Anthony, and when Lambert returned into the house after seeing the carriage drive off, he found his mother counselling Fanny and Edgar to take a little walk on the beach together.

"Mamma, I want to stay and worry," said Fanny, candidly, "it's such fun seeing the house turned upside down."

"And I want to stay with Bertie, mamma," said Edgar, "but I won't worry."

"But you see I would rather have you out of the way, my dears," said Mrs. Deshon, reluctant

to refuse them anything, "Bertie, don't you think the children had better go out?"

She vanished into the recesses of the store-room as she spoke, and left to him, as she often did, the task of enforcing her desires.

"It is quite enough that mamma wishes it," he said, "run and put on your bonnet, Fanny."

"Oh but, Bertie, I must stay and tease nurse, she is helping mamma to take out things, and to everything mamma proposes she says, 'oh, but do you think her ladyship would like that, mum?' as if Lady Eynesford would notice or care about such silly things! And Ellis is just as bad, mamma says she thinks his brain is turned."

"If so, I suspect you have contributed to it, Fanny, by getting continually in his way, and interrupting mamma when she has been giving her orders. Now I won't have any more talk, you are to go and get ready directly."

"Bertie, you are a tyrant, a wicked old Blue Beard, Dionysius of Syracuse was nothing to you," said Fanny hugging him, but she only paused to make him kiss her, and then rushed up stairs to obey his orders.

Edgar had not offered a single remonstrance, if Bertie said they were to go out they must, he did not even pout as he was a little apt to do at orders from any one else which were contrary to his inclination. All he said was, "May I come to you when you are dressing for the evening, Bertie, and then I can take out all your things for you, I know where your best coat is quite well."

"That's right, you shall be my little valet; do you know that I am going to ask for a share of your small apartment to-night, and give mine to Cousin Lewis?"

Edgar danced in ecstasies, "I shall sleep on the floor, and you shall have my bed, Bertie."

"Then you must kindly provide an apparatus for cutting me smaller, so that I may be able to fit in ; no, no, mamma is going to extemporise a bed for me somehow."

"And I shall wake very early in the morning, and talk to you."

"You'd better not, I shall only snore, just think how tired we shall both be after this evening's gaiety. And, by the by, I wanted to say, Eddie, that though mamma is going to be so kind as to let you sit up for the party, I am sure she does not mean you to sit up the whole evening, so mind you go to bed directly she or Gyneth tells you."

Edgar looked doubtful, and Lambert continued, "It ought not to be necessary for me to say this, you know very well, Eddie, that I shall never be satisfied with you till you obey mamma as readily as you do papa or me."

That Edgar did not obey her was greatly Mrs. Deshon's own fault, but Lambert did not wish to think so, and if he had would not have admitted it to Edgar. He was intensely fond of this child, but had no idea of showing it after Gyneth's pattern by perpetual indulgence, though he treated him in a fond, friendly, confiding fashion, such as does not often fall to the lot of little brothers. Lambert could say many things to Edgar that he would never have dreamed of saying to any other person, and it was partly the consciousness of this which made the child so happy in his society. Bertie was much more strict with him than anyone else, he knew that very well, but then Bertie trusted him, made a friend of him, and that was more than compensation.

Poor Lambert ! he worked away hard that afternoon, doing anything and everything that his mother asked him, without a thought whether it were "infra dig.," and if Ellis's brain was turned it

was quite an uncalled-for and unreasonable result, as Mrs. Deshon was the most goodhumoured and *unworrying* of arrangers possible, and Lambert the most lucid of directors.

The riding party returned the first, and found the dinner-table spread in the library, while the dining-room was converted into a dancing-room, for which in point of size it was admirably fitted. All the furniture had been taken away, except a few chairs in a little alcove intended for the musicians; the Turkey carpet had been rolled up and carried off, the chandelier in the centre of the room was wreathed with flowers, and the whole had such a festal air, that Rose and Lawrence could not resist a preliminary *valse*, though the former's riding-habit was not well adapted for dancing. This performance over, Rose volunteered to keep the children quiet (since they could not walk the whole afternoon), and accompanied by Lawrence, carried them off to the garden, where she entertained them with that silliest of games, "I love my love," till as fate would have it, just as she arrived at the letter L, which came to her turn, Lambert and Lewis took it into their heads to join her.

"I am delighted to hear that you love your love with an L, Miss Burnaby," said Mr. Grantham mischievously, "here are three at your service."

Rose's blush was vivid enough to surprise the two younger L's, but she laughed off her confusion, and began: "I love my love with an L because he is loveable."

"A natural sequence," put in Lewis.

"I hate him because he is—lazy."

"So am I," said the incorrigible Mr. Grantham.

"His name is—oh: what shall I say?"

"Lambert, do say Lambert!" cried little Edgar.

"Leonard," suggested Lambert himself.

She looked even more fluttered than before ; her hazel eyes were growing quite piteous.

"Lubin," proposed Mr. Grantham with a reassuring glance at her, and she went on happily again. "His name is Lubin, and he comes from Lapland ; he gave me a—"

"Locket !" suggested Fanny ; "you've got one on now, with L on it too."

Mr. Grantham treated Fan to a fierce look, such as he was wont to extemporise when personating "Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum," for the benefit of the children of his acquaintance, and thus diverted her attention from Rose, who after a minute went on.

"He gave me a lambkin for a present, and a bunch of lettuces for a nosegay."

The children clapped, and Lambert said, "very well got through, but I was commissioned to tell you that dinner will be ready in half an hour."

"Then I must not wait to hear M, but must go and dress. I hope the next speaker will be more fluent than I was."

She went towards the house, and Lewis followed her. "What a shame to have three L's in a family," she said, turning round ; "I was in such a puzzle till you helped me with Lubin."

"Poor little lady !" he answered with playful compassion.



CHAPTER XIV.

“ What if a day, or a month, or a year,
Crown thy delights with a thousand sweet contentings,
May not the change of a night or an hour
Cross thy delights with as many sad tormentings ? ”

Old Song.

EHE villa scarcely knew itself that evening, it was so replete with light, and life, and music. Even before all the guests had arrived, the drawing-room was quite full, and Colonel Deshon ordered the musicians (two or three men picked from the band) to strike up a valse, which might tempt some of the company into the dancing-room. Anthony claimed the hand of a young lady, who by some was thought to be the star of the evening, a Miss Estcourt, a daughter of the Governor, Sir Benjamin Estcourt. But several other gentlemen, who preferred liveliness and grace to inanimate beauty, obtained introductions to Rose, who was in bright spirits, and looked so charming that many were inclined to proclaim her the belle of the room. Though but lately a *débutante*, she had been part of a season in London, and moreover had travelled too much, and been too much brought forward to be troubled with *mauvaise honte*; she accepted the homage that fell to her share quite naturally,

merely smiling at finding herself engaged for eight dances before one had commenced, but according the first to Major Willis, a very quiet unpretending man, who had shown less *empressement* than any of the others who had begged for it.

She was soon floating round in airy circles to the tune of the Maud waltzes; and Mr. Grant-ham, who had ceased to take part in fast dances, leant against the door of the room and watched her. Not so attentively, however, but that his glances often strayed to the hall, where he apparently expected some one to appear whose delay occasioned him uneasiness.

When Rose and her partner stopped for a few minutes to rest, he approached her, inquiring, "Is Gyneth ill? I could not see her anywhere in the drawing-room, and she is certainly not among the dancers."

"No, she is detained by an unlucky *contretemps*, Fanny will explain it to you. I am ready now, Major Willis," and she was off again before he could ask any more.

He threaded his way through the various couples who were dancing, to where Fanny was standing watching the performance, and secretly longing for a partner. "Where is your sister?" he asked eagerly; "has anything happened to prevent her coming down?"

"Only that she has no dress to come in," replied Fanny bluntly; "the dressmaker sent one home this morning, but it didn't fit a bit, so mamma sent it back, and wanted to say that it must be returned again by one o'clock, but Gyneth said that would hurry the poor dressmaker too much, and told the girl it would do if she had it by six, so I suppose they thought it didn't matter, and they haven't sent it home yet."

"How I wish I were Cinderella's godmother!"

said Lewis; "but can't she put on something else?"

"She hasn't got any other ball-dress; you know, cousin Lewis, she has never been at a large dancing party before. I dare say her dress will come soon, and she is all ready except for that."

"You will see her quite resplendent in a minute," said Rose, who caught Fan's last words as she flitted by.

"Yes, do watch for her, cousin Lewis; you can't think how smart she'll be. It's pink, and she looked so nice in it when she tried it on this morning. Mamma is so vexed that it hasn't come home."

Mr. Grantham heard Mrs. Deshon's silvery tones speaking to some one in the drawing-room, as he wandered out into the hall, and failed to discover in them the slightest trace of vexation. "She certainly has a delightful temper," he admitted to himself, "and fortunately she has bequeathed it to her children; never was any one who took the world easier than she does, and she has her reward in having preserved those youthful looks and that pretty smile uninjured by time and family cares."

The valse came to an end, and a quadrille was about to commence; Rose stood fanning herself by the door for a minute, while her partner—Anthony this time—went to seek for a *vis-à-vis* sufficiently select to please him.

"Is he like his brother?" asked Mr. Grantham, without thinking it necessary to say who "he" was.

"Dryer, I fancy. I was glad it was a valse, for I did not know what to say. Did I look very stupid?"

He made her a little playful complimentary bow, which was meant to imply the very reverse, and the hazel eyes sparkled with smiles.

"Did Fanny tell you about Gyneth's dress? is it not a pity? I wanted to wait for her, but Mrs. Deshon wouldn't let me; and it is such a becoming dress too, you will see she will look quite enchanting."

"I am prepared to be dazzled," said Mr. Grantham laughing: but at that moment the soft rustle of a dress was heard on the staircase, and peeping out he gave a start of surprise, and exclaimed, "'She went by dale and she went by down, with a single rose in her hair:' it is your turn to be astonished."

Quietly, with a grave, timid air, Gyneth, for she it was, came through the hall. The pink crape, with its flounces, and bouquets of May, was nowhere to be seen; she had on a white muslin dress, trimmed with lace, a single string of pearls (which had been an heirloom in her grandmother's family) encircled her neck, and a red rose placed at one side of her head was the one bit of colour which relieved the general whiteness. She might almost have been a snow maiden, so white and cold did she look, so serene and noiseless, and silent; anything more unlike the stylish young lady that her mother had meant to make of her could not have been devised.

Mr. Grantham secretly rubbed his hands, but feigned disappointment so well that Gyneth believed it real. "I thought *you* at least wouldn't have cared," she said reproachfully.

"But, my dearest Gyneth, how was it? didn't the dress come?" inquired Rose, regardless that the quadrille was beginning.

"No, it never came, and mamma sent me word by Edgar that I had better not wait any longer. I wish I might have put on this at once; it would have been better than waiting."

"You look like 'die weisse dame' herself," said

Lawrence, coming up, and regarding her critically, "or like the Lurlei off my meerschaum."

"What next?" said Gyneth, quietly, but the white face glowed a little as Mr. Armstrong rushed up to her. "Miss Deshon, are you really not engaged? I can find a *vis-à-vis* in a minute: I have been looking for you everywhere. I was quite afraid the fatigues of the morning had been too much for you."

Gyneth smiled a negative, and took the arm he offered her; in a few minutes more she was dancing in the same quadrille as Rose and Anthony. Mr. Grantham, left alone, became cynical, and criticised the music, which was excellent.

Lady Eynesford came into the dancing-room, that she might have the pleasure of seeing her son enjoy himself, and soon spied out Gyneth in her snowy robes.

"Your little girl looks very well in her costume à *l'ingénue*," she remarked to Mrs. Deshon; "how small and graceful her head looks with those beautiful braids, and that one flower, compared with the young ladies who have heaped a whole flower-garden on their unfortunate heads."

"I am very glad you approve her taste," said Mrs. Deshon; "I confess I think she looks rather ghostly. I never saw such a set of pale children as mine, all except Jeannie; how I wish *she* were here!"

"That little Greek is the prettiest thing in the room," said the old lady, looking towards Photinée, who was dressed in a picturesque, fanciful manner which became her peculiar style of beauty, "if I were a young man I should be tempted to devote myself to her, and neglect the young English girls altogether."

"It is fortunate that every one is not so unpatriotic," said Mrs. Deshon, smiling; "what do

you think of Mrs. Ross, Lewis? do you agree with Lady Eynesford in admiring her?"

"Very much, as a picture, but give me a well-bred, unaffected little English girl"—

"Such as Miss Burnaby," suggested Mrs. Deshon.

"Yes, she is a very good type, and for those who like a severer style, there is the classical Miss Estcourt."

"My little Gyneth is neither one thing nor the other," said Mrs. Deshon, rather interrogatively.

Mr. Grantham turned to the Countess with a remark on a distinguished literary man whom he had met at her house in the spring.

Mrs. Deshon went away to see that Katie was not tiring Lady Estcourt with her prattle, dropping a pleasant word here and there among her guests as she passed. "What a charming person Mrs. Deshon is!" and "What an agreeable hostess Mrs. Deshon makes!" were speeches often repeated in the course of that evening.

Colonel Deshon, who cared not at all about being popular himself, was delighted with his wife's evident popularity, and in his secret heart believed firmly that she was the prettiest woman there, as well as the most charming. He watched to see if Lambert were enjoying himself, but could not at first decide in the affirmative, for Lambert was dancing with Miss Estcourt, and her monosyllabic replies did not help out his shy attempts at conversation. Decidedly the little Rose was the happiest of the party; it mattered not what the dance was, or who the partner was; she had always something to say, was always gay and animated, the arch eyes were always bright, the pretty lips for ever rippling into smiles. Even those who began by admiring Miss Estcourt the most had one by one swerved from their allegiance;

and very nearly the only person who resisted to the last the Rose's influence was Mr. Armstrong, who throughout the evening continued to devote himself exclusively to Gyneth, not taking much notice of any other lady, except perhaps Mrs. Ross. At first Gyneth felt forlorn enough to be grateful to any one who was kind and attentive, but when she saw her mother's smile as Mr. Armstrong invited her to dance for the fifth time that evening, she was glad that an engagement with Captain Ross enabled her to decline the invitation. Of course he had not been her only partner —she had danced once with Anthony, with Major Willis, Major Morrison, and a youthful ensign who lisped so much that she couldn't make out what he said. At the close of the quadrille with Captain Ross, Mrs. Deshon proposed some music as a variety, and summoned Gyneth to the drawing-room to perform a showy piece of Ascher's. Poor Gyneth ; it was fortunate that she had been trained to such accuracy that no amount of fright sufficed to make her play false notes ; for she was secretly trembling, and feeling as if she must certainly break down. She rushed through the prelude with a haste which happily was taken for brilliancy ; but as she began the first notes of the air a soft voice behind her said "Gently," and she immediately moderated the time to that indicated by the composer. The same voice whispered "Bravo" when the most difficult passage had been successfully got through, and a hand which she knew well turned over the leaves for her, just at the very minute she wished, not before or after, as so many inadvertently do. But when she rose from the piano, Mr. Grantham withdrew into the background, and was not among those who thanked her, and insinuated compliments on her playing.

She saw him leaning against the mantelpiece,

while Mrs. Alban Ross sang "Una voce," and thought to herself that he looked older and graver than he used to do; he was growing more like the "S. Augustine" of Ary Scheffer's picture, to which she had always fancied he bore a slight resemblance. At the conclusion of the song she approached him, "Was not that a treat for you? Did you ever, out of a concert-room, hear a more beautiful voice?"

"I never heard a *finer* one, a more beautiful one I think I have. You got bravely through your piece, it was something new to hear you playing Ascher's music."

"Yes, I would give it all for one air of Mendelssohn's, but mamma likes it. I have got quite a fresh set of pieces, I scarcely ever play my old ones now."

"Does no one here care for them?"

"No; no one in my home; Lady Eynesford likes that style of music, I played some of them to her yesterday."

"But what's Lambert about that he doesn't ask for them? I should have thought *he* at least would have delighted in your music."

"I don't think he cares at all about it; he turns over the leaves for me sometimes, and says, 'Thank you, Gyneth,' when I've done, but he doesn't seem to mind what it is I play."

"The wretch! he must be put through a severe course of Beethoven immediately, I will go and pronounce sentence on him," and he moved slowly away.

Gyneth was disappointed, she wanted to ask him about her grandmother and the Helmores, and his friend the East-London rector; it was strange that he should think it necessary to take himself off when she was just beginning a conversation with him. She thought that she had discovered

his real motive when she saw him, after making a laughing remark *en passant* to Lambert, go up to Rose, and offer his arm to lead her to the piano, though the lively little French song which she sang at his request, did not seem to have any especial charms for him.

Before the evening was over Gyneth played again ; Wallace's "La Rêve" this time, and though many people talked through it, as is generally the case with instrumental music, one listener stood silent behind her chair, and the same ready hand turned over the leaves, rather to the discomfiture of Mr. Armstrong, who was ambitious of that honour. When she dropped her fan in the dance that well-known hand picked it up, and reserved it for her ; when tired and heated, she sat down for a minute to rest, that same hand brought her an ice, and fanned her while she ate it.

It was the watchful unobtrusive guardianship of a kind old friend, but not the marked, cordial, affectionate attention which she had been accustomed to receive from her cousin. Poor little girl, she thought he must be vexed with her, that she must have "done something ;" though what this something could be quite passed her comprehension. He would still be kind to her of course, he was far too chivalric—yes, she still held to that epithet—to fail in any needful courtesy because she had displeased him, but he evidently did not care to talk much to her, to tell her of his plans and interests as he used to do, to inquire into her occupations, or rally her on her peculiar tastes. The one person whom she had counted on as being sure never to alter towards her, had altered already, and without any apparent reason ; it was very perplexing, the gentle young mind was quite puzzled and pained by it. When vain people meet with comparative coldness from a friend of whose affec-

tion they felt sure, they usually ascribe all the fault to him or her as the case may be, he or she is fickle, unreasonable, inconstant, unworthy of continued regard; a humble person takes the very opposite view, their friend must be right, the fault must be in themselves, and it was thus that Gyneth reasoned now. But though so free from vanity, she had a considerable share of pride, and this prevented her from asking any explanation of Lewis's altered manner, and from even showing that she perceived the change. Since he left her to others, she appeared to content herself with them, took politely the fair measure of general attention which fell to her as the daughter of the house, and accepted serenely Mr. Armstrong's assiduities. She really liked him, he was so completely unaffected, so free from pretension, so entirely true and simple in his tastes and conversation: as yet quite unspoiled by the possession of a large income, and the prospect of inheriting millions at his father's death.

Anthony Waller was rather indignant at Gyneth's amiability towards Mr. Armstrong, and was consequently not at all disposed to play the attentive, cousinly part towards her which he knew his mother wished he should. "My dear, you have only danced with your cousin once," she observed to him, reproachfully, as he lingered dutifully by her chair, "go and ask her to dance this set of Lancers with you."

"Impossible, mother; I am engaged to Katie, this is to be her last dance before she goes to bed."

"She had better have been there an hour ago," said Lady Eynesford; "Fanny spoils those children of hers most completely. Gyneth and that eldest boy are ten times more respectful and obedient than the younger ones."

"Oh, Lambert is an embodiment of all the virtues combined," laughed Anthony, "and Gyneth is a very good little girl, and pleasant enough when she isn't setting traps for Cresus."

"What do you mean?" said the Countess, opening her splendid eyes, "you know I hate insinuations, Anthony."

"I mean that she has a predilection for gilt buttons; I wonder what Armstrong's crest is, 'Buttons or, on chief gules, with hooks and eyes rampant,' I should think; for a wonder he doesn't parade it, after the fashion of most *nouveaux riches*."

"He's a very pleasant modest-looking young man, I think," said Lady Eynesford, who was ready to give every one their due, and would have had no hesitation in praising a chimney-sweep's son, if he had appeared worthy of commendation.

"I only wish he were in any other regiment," said Anthony, "he is most provokingly able and determined to purchase: a poor younger son has no chance with him; if we don't take care, mother, he'll be a major while I'm only a lieutenant."

"Of course you must purchase your captaincy; I will provide the means; and you know you are very young yet, Anthony, younger than Mr. Armstrong, I should think."

"Yes, by some years; but see, here is my small partner coming to look for me. Well, pussy-cat, are you come to scold me for my want of gallantry?"

"'Oo mus' come and tell mamma dat I is going to dance wis 'oo, s'e wants me to go to bed, but I say I s'ant."

"Not a very pretty speech for a little girl to make," said Lady Eynesford, but Katie jumped on her knee, and stole a kiss, saying, "'Oo mustn't be angry wis Cousin Anthony's pussy."

"Katie, my darling, you really must go to bed," said Mrs. Deshon, passing by, "and you too, Edgar."

Katie's answer was an entreaty to her cousin to make haste and join the dance; Edgar, who had been going to dance with Mrs. Ross, paused a minute, swallowed down a choking feeling in his throat, and asked her to excuse him, as he must go to bed.

"No, no, I shall run after Mrs. Deshon," said Photinée, "and tell her you cannot go just this minute."

But Edgar caught hold of her hand, and stopped her, "Bertie said I was to go directly I was told. I must, please, good-night."

She gazed at him with a sweet, fond, admiring look. "Good-night, my little good child; I see you will be another 'Bertie' some day."

"Good-night, Edgar," said Mr. Grantham, "shake hands, old fellow," and he took the slight, child-fingers into his most cordial grasp.

Edgar answered both with the gentle regardlessness which characterized his manner to all except the two or three people of whom he was really fond, and went quietly away. Katie, when it came to her turn, exchanged innumerable coquettish good-nights with Anthony, and finally insisted on her father's carrying her up stairs, looking back all the way over his shoulder at her cousin, and kissing her hand to him with an air of the drollest condescension.

Gyneth was not sorry when the good-nights became general, and the guests began to go away, though the last part of the evening had been rather better than the first. She had had one quadrille with Lewis, and they had talked of her grandmamma, of a book which Mr. Helmore had lately published, and of one or two other matters of interest to her.

She hoped for a renewal of the conversation the next day, but was doomed to be disappointed, for as she was bidding farewell to some of the guests, she overheard Lewis say to Rose, "Mine must be good-bye as well as good-night, for I must return to London by the seven o'clock train to-morrow, so shall be off long before you are down in the morning. Have you any more commissions for me? you see I can be trusted."

"You can, indeed," Rose answered, and something followed in too low a tone for Gyneth to hear, ending with, "I am going home to-morrow, so I shall see you again on Sunday."

"How tired you look, my dearest Gyneth," said Mrs. Deshon, when the last of the company had taken their departure; "you do not bear fatigue so well as your friend."

"Oh, I am as strong as possible," said Rose, "nothing hurts me, and I have enjoyed myself exceedingly. I am so much obliged to you for all this pleasure, dear Mrs. Deshon."

"You have come in for a great deal of gratitude, to-night, Fanny," said Colonel Deshon, smiling, "I hope it has not been bought too dearly;" and he looked at her with tender anxiety, for the dark lines round her eyes seemed to presage a headache the next day.

"Not at all: the afternoon was the only troublesome part, and Bertie helped me famously then. My dear boy, come here, and let me look at you; I am afraid you will be quite knocked up."

Lambert, who had been putting away Gyneth's music for her, came forward with a smile.

"He looks more alive than any of us, I declare," said Colonel Deshon; "I shall begin to think dissipation agrees with you, Bertie."

Gyneth thought so too; even the bright Rose was beginning to look a little fagged, and Lewis

looked not only lazy, but manifestly and unusually weary. Lady Eynesford had already retired to bed; Lawrence was reclining languidly on the sofa; Lambert and his father alone showed no signs of weariness, though they of all cared the least for gaiety.

"Have you really enjoyed yourself, Bertie?" said Mrs. Deshon.

"Not only myself, but a great many other people, mother," he answered brightly; "I enjoyed seeing you for one."

"And I hope you enjoyed that deaf old lady that you were bawling to," said Lawrence, waking up, "and that thin young lady who looked all elbows, with whom you danced so perseveringly."

Lambert only laughed, and spoke of something else; but Gyneth looked up with a sudden perception of *why* her brother's face was so bright, and his voice so fresh and cheerful; he had found room for the exercise of kindness and unselfishness, and, not seeking enjoyment, had experienced it almost involuntarily. If *she* had acted on this principle the evening need not have been so disappointing to her, she thought, even though Lewis's friendship for her had declined.

As it was, she could not feel otherwise than sad, and when her mother called her into her room for a minute to unfasten a bracelet, she looked so dejected that Mrs. Deshon was quite concerned, and said tenderly, "My dearest, I am afraid you are feeling overtired; this long fatiguing day has been too much for you; I was in hopes it would have been quite a happy day to you, having your friend with you, and your cousin too."

"It was pleasant to see how happy Rose was, and how every one admired her," said Gyneth, brightening; "every one at least but that disagreeable Major Willis, who said that she flirted,

and asked me if she had much fortune, as if that could signify to him!"

"My dear, you will think me uncharitable if I say that the rumour of the old Canon's riches had something to do with the attention paid to her; but tell me, whom was she talking to, when Major Willis said she was flirting?"

"To Lewis," said Gyneth, rather hesitatingly.

"Then I am not altogether surprised, there is evidently something between them, and I rather doubt its being anything serious, there is such a disparity in their ages."

"But some people do not think that an objection, mamma, and if there is *anything* between them, I am sure it must be in earnest, Lewis would scorn to flirt!"

"Do you *still* think so? My dear child, I know what it is to be disappointed in a person; don't fancy I can't feel for you."

If she had expected tears, or an appeal for sympathy, in answer, she was much mistaken; Gyneth's head rose proudly, her clear true eyes were lifted with their fullest gaze. "Mamma, I see no reason for being disappointed in Lewis. If he should marry Rose, it would not lessen his regard for us, and why should it lower our opinion of him? I do not believe that he would flirt, I know he disapproves of it."

"And you forgive him, then?"

"There is nothing to forgive; I was grieved because I thought I must have done something which had vexed him, but if he only did not talk so much to me as usual because he was engrossed with Rose, there is no need to perplex myself with such a notion any longer. I daresay they will explain it all to me in time."

They! Had she already familiarized herself with the idea of their attachment? Mrs. Deshon,

though a good deal relieved, was at the same time very much puzzled: she had been mistaken,—so it seemed,—in both Lewis and her daughter. She had thought that Lewis was sincerely attached to Gyneth, and that Gyneth unconsciously returned his affection in some measure, and not liking Lewis, and really believing that Gyneth was too young to know her own mind, she had been anxious to withdraw her from his influence, and to bring her into the society of other gentlemen. When driving with Lewis from the railway station that morning, she had talked—apropos of Jeannie's marriage,—of the folly of girls marrying too young, and of her hopes that she might not be robbed of Gyneth for some time to come. She had even hinted delicately, that she should not think it generous of any man to take advantage of a girl's ignorance of other men to bind her to him for life, when all the time he might not be her heart's real choice. All this had been said in the abstract, and Lewis had 'quite agreed' with her, and though apparently a little bored had seemed in no way pained or excited by the subject. He had neither paid much attention to Gyneth during the day, nor yet avoided her in any—apparently—studied manner; he had seemed careful of her, and kind to her, but all his smiles, his marked courtesies, and lively interests had been for Rose. Possibly he was only amusing himself, only flirting, but would he have done so if he had really cared about Gyneth? And could she care for him, and yet be so anxious to suppose that his attentions to Rose were serious, and not a mere passing flirtation?

Mrs. Deshon was perplexed; she did not yet fully understand her daughter. "Good night, my darling child," she said fondly; "make haste to bed, and do not get up to-morrow till you feel

thoroughly rested. You look better already than when we began to talk."

"Do I? I shall be better still when I have had a nice long sleep. I hope your poor head won't be aching to-morrow; good-night, dearest mamma."

She went away, outwardly healed, inwardly more deeply wounded than she had ever been before. She had been obliged to share her room with her friend, and the Rose kept up a lively chatter about the events of the day. During the course of this, Gyneth noticed, without mentioning it, the new ring on Rose's finger; the 'L' on her locket she had observed already.

Though so tired, she was a long time over her evening reading, so long, that before she lay down, Rose was asleep. But while she was still wakeful and meditative, Rose woke up, and murmured sleepily, "You haven't given me a kiss, Gyneth, can we manage one in the dark?"

There was an instant's pause, then Gyneth's gentle voice said, "Darling, I thought you were asleep; put your face nearer to me; that is right, give me another kiss, and now let me kiss you."





CHAPTER XV.

“She wist not (silly mayd) what she did ale,
Yet wist she was not well at ease perdy,
Yet thought it was not love, but some melancholy.”
SPENSER.

“**L**AURENCE, I can’t get on with this, there is no good English word for ‘wunderschön,’ ‘wonderfully pretty’ is too long, and does not convey the right sense.” And Gyneth laid down the German poem she was translating, and leant wearily back in her chair.

“Come and sing then,” said Lawrence, throwing away the novel he was reading, and sauntering towards the piano. “You get through that ‘Lebewohl’ very well now, spite of your cracked chest, or whatever it is.”

“My weak lungs, do you mean?” said Gyneth, smiling. “No, I don’t care to sing the ‘Lebewohl’ this morning, I’d rather sing Mendelssohn’s ‘Scheiden:’” and in a somewhat feeble but very sweet voice she began :

“Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rath,
Dass man was man am liebsten hat
Muss meiden;
Wiewohl nichts in dem Lauf der Welt
Dem Herzen, ach! so sauer fällt
Als scheiden! ja scheiden!”

The air was plaintive even to sadness, the words were sadder still, save for the gleam of hope in the "auf wiederehn," at the end. Such melancholy ditties rather chimed in with Gyneth's mood just then, she was not feeling very well or very bright, and the mild damp autumn weather was conducive to languor. Mrs. Deshon had at length succeeded in getting a daily governess, so there were no longer the children's lessons to occupy Gyneth in the morning, and there were but few calls on her for active industry of any kind, for her mother managed all the housekeeping matters, invitations, etc., herself, and left most of the family needlework to "nurse," a clever industrious woman who prided herself on "getting through" more than all the rest of the servants put together. Gyneth admitted to herself that she would have been better for some one who would have "routed her about" a little, encouraged her to hard study and daily walks, and interdicted tales and poetry till after two o'clock in the day; but she had not energy enough just now to supply the deficiency by being her own ruler, setting herself tasks, and calling herself to account for wasted hours. She read some deep books because she liked them, and others because her father recommended them to her, but this was by fits and starts; and story-books, German ballads, and Italian sonnets, filled up the intervening time. She began writing poetry again too, and resumed the narrative of her Japanese hero's adventures, though not with much spirit. She usually had the drawing-room all to herself for the first half of the morning, for Lawrence went into Harbournouth every day after breakfast, to study with a mathematical master for a couple of hours, the children were engaged with their governess, Lambert with his own studies, and Mrs. Deshon was busied with household matters,

or her favourite occupation of gardening. Colonel Deshon was generally out during the greater part of the day, and though he liked to hear Gyneth play in the evenings, and to discuss with her books of travel and general information,—which he sat up at night to read—he made no other demand upon her time, and left her free to follow such pursuits as she liked best. Gyneth when she came to live at home had expected to be obliged to give up much of her leisure, and had quite made up her mind to relinquish day-dreams, verse-making, and all pursuits which she could not share with her home-circle; she had had a vision of teaching the children, reading aloud to her mother, working for her father and brothers, writing notes and running messages for everybody, and though this ideal did not commend itself to her taste, it did to her sense of duty, and she had prepared herself to act up to it accordingly. At first it had seemed as if her expectations were to be realized, but now that the children's lessons were taken out of her hands, Lawrence no longer required cramming for the examination, and all things had settled into their usual course, she found herself almost as free to pursue her own peculiar occupations as she had been when living with her grandmamma. She had to practise a few waltzes and galoppes daily, to pay visits occasionally with her mother, to take charge of Katie sometimes, to sew on a button, or make a purse for her father and brothers now and then, to assist in entertaining guests, and—now that she had made her début—to go to a few evening parties, beyond this there was nothing obligatory, and she began to think that she had been mistaken in her ideas of family life. Certainly she had been mistaken in the notion that "large families always quarrelled;" during the two or three months that had passed since she came to

Harbourmouth, not anything approaching to a quarrel had taken place in her home. There had been a few slight differences between Fanny and Edgar, speedily set at rest by a gentle word from Lambert, and once or twice Katie had pouted and fretted a little, and Lawrence had grumbled at being forbidden to smoke, and given way for a while to a sort of lazy illhumour, which his mother laughed at and nobody minded. But this was all; they were none of them in the habit of teasing each other, contradicting for contradiction's sake, or in any way provoking outbreaks of temper, at least in any intentional manner. A very energetic earnest person might have been provoked by Lambert's timid hesitations, Lawrence's quiet selfishness, Fanny's heedless, awkward ways, and Katie's airs and graces. Even Edgar's indifference and reserve would have been trying to such an one, and most of all would they have been annoyed by the "laissez aller" system of the mother of the family, whose easy indulgence knew no bounds, and who found matter for amusement in what most people would have regarded as occasions for anxiety and watchful care. Gyneth, though not particularly energetic or active-minded, could not help being a little annoyed—and still more grieved—at some things she observed in her home. She had expected to find home discipline rather hard at first, she found herself rendered uncomfortable by the want of it; she had anticipated annoyance from Lambert's domineering tendencies, she found herself getting out of patience with him for being too backward in interfering, and she began to think that the temper that had been reckoned so sweet was really less so than that of her brothers and sisters; for none but herself seemed to be fidgeted by the general unpunctuality whenever her father was absent, or displeased by Katie's waywardness

and Fanny's rude speeches. Lambert's influence was so silent that she did not always perceive its workings, or acknowledge its beneficial effects, she had yet to learn how much more contrarily things would go when this influence was withdrawn, though that it could not be entirely, for even when he was absent, "what Bertie liked," "what Bertie would disapprove," was foremost in the minds of both Fanny and Edgar. She never owned to herself that she was disappointed in her mother, but perhaps she was so, she could not make up her mind about her, and that is always unsatisfactory. It was difficult to her to understand how so much real goodness and tenderness, so much right principle and sweet feeling, could co-exist with such easy indifference about many important matters, such a lack of noble enthusiasm, such a wellnigh worldly tone of mind; and she shrank from analysing her mother's character, because it was her mother's and so too sacred for criticism, she preferred stifling down her unsatisfied feelings, and trying to dwell only on the bright side, and very bright that was, of Mrs. Deshon's sayings and doings. But this vague sense of disappointment and doubt had one very decided consequence, it prevented her from breaking through her habitual reserve in her mother's favour, and opening her heart to her freely; she gave her warm affection, and—so far as it lay in her power—most dutiful service, but she did not give her her confidence.

She did not withhold it from her to give it to some one else, she merely kept complete silence on the subject that was nearest her heart, a dull drooping lonely feeling oppressed her, and perhaps she gave way to it more than was right, but she never sought to ease it by complaint; if a secret inward bitterness gave at moments an appearance of irritation to her manner, she repented of it as a

failure in temper, and never even to herself excused it as springing from unhappiness. Why should she be unhappy? there was no outward visible cause, she had on the contrary many reasons to be glad and thankful; therefore she was not unhappy,—so she argued,—only cross, or foolish or unreasonable, or *something*, it was better to leave that “*something*” undefined. She wrote to her grandmother twice every week, and entered very fully into the detail of all that was seen, done, and read, in the family, taking the cheerful side of everything, thinking how she could best make granny smile over her home chronicle, and best enable her to picture to herself her child’s new surroundings. Very pretty, loving, and sometimes very clever letters those were; so old Mrs. Deshon thought you may be sure, so Lewis Grantham perhaps thought too, when now and then, as a great privilege, he was permitted to read them. But neither these letters, nor those which Gyneth wrote to her friend Rose, who returned home a day after the presentation of colours, contained any confession of secret dissatisfaction, any appeal for sympathy. The kind grandmamma’s answers Gyneth looked forward to as weekly treats; she had had one this morning, and had read it before Lawrence returned from Harbournouth, and set her to translate a German love-poem. Thus the letter ran:—

“MY DEAREST CHILD,

“I hastened down this morning anticipating a letter, and was not disappointed: thank you for your welcome news, your letters give me a fuller impression of your home life than I can glean from Rose’s or your cousin’s descriptions, though my white-robed nymph, as Lewis described her to me, is a pleasant image this gloomy day. Take

care of yourself, my precious one, during this varying autumn weather, and do not think it fine ladyism to guard against damp, for it has often proved hurtful to you. Those long walks on the beach with your brothers can scarcely be practicable just now; I have even been prevented this week from taking my daily trot to the Duomo, but yesterday morning there was a kindly gleam of sun which I was glad to take advantage of. It was early, and I went in at your favourite entrance, the western door, and walked round, it was a peculiarly happy moment for the light, and, certainly, I never saw the beauty of the farther chapels, and the fine arches that support the roof so majestic in its effects. Mr. Burnaby was there, but not taking an active part, since Rose returned he has had another attack of bronchitis. I like Mr. Willis's manner in the service more and more, it is so peculiarly quiet and devout, indeed, he is altogether good. Lewis likes him particularly, and even our little mischievous Rose has ceased to be witty at his expense, and seems to stand rather in awe of him as well as being ready to honour him for his sterling goodness. It appears he is expecting his mother from abroad shortly, a very gay lady, we hear, very unlike him in any way; Rose seems most anxious for her to arrive; poor child, I daresay she finds us dull after her lively weeks at Harbournouth. She has been much shut up with her father since she returned, and has scarce had any companions but Mr. Willis, who as you know is habitually grave, and myself who would fain cheer her, but can but prose about the little matters that fill up an old lady's life. Lewis wakes me up sometimes to an interest in public affairs, by his readings from the papers, and calculations of what the real schemes may be of that mysterious Louis Napoleon. I listen, happy

not to be a ruler, or even to have to make an opinion on the puzzling question of politics. He will be taking his holiday soon, I think, and talks of visiting Brittany; I tell him he must collect some Breton legends for you. I shall miss him very much, his talk opens up so many subjects to me, of which I hear nothing from anyone else; our little Rose remarked to me yesterday that 'he was the most suggestive person she knew'; I can see that she quite enjoys her weekly chats with him. She has given me a most picturesque description of your pretty Greek friend, but her chief enthusiasm is for your mother, on whose kindness to her she continually dwells.

"Tell papa his letter was most welcome, and shall be replied to ere long, I am not unmindful of his wish to have me among you for a time, but cannot leave home just now, I have let Eliza go to nurse her father, who is dangerously ill, and I cannot leave the care of the house to Anne, who is a good girl, but so giddy that she needs an older head to think for her. I trust, however, to come to you before the winter sets in, I long to see and know all my dear children. Tell the dear German student that he must keep a corner of his heart for the Gross-mutter, how amusing must he be to you! and clever little Fanny, too, with her droll sayings. Kiss my blue-eyed Edgar for me, and my tiny unknown grandchild, who Lewis tells me is the little coquette of the house.

"My love is with you all. I am ever my precious child's loving grandmother,

"JANE DESHON."

Her grandmother's visit was something pleasant for Gyneth to look forward to, and this letter brought a vision of the dear, gentle, old lady, most distinctly before her, but nevertheless she drew

from its perusal almost more sadness than comfort. Her mind would perversely dwell on that sentence about Rose's enjoyment of Lewis's talks, and though she told herself that this was as it should be, and that she ought to be pleased at it, she did not make much progress in attaining a proper degree of satisfaction. She felt unaccountably depressed, and so dissatisfied with herself, so humbled, and despondent, that as she sang Mendelssohn's pathetic "Parting" song, she could scarcely prevent the tears from springing to her eyes.

"That is delicious," said Lawrence, sentimentally; "*chantes encore!* here is '*Tais-toi, mon cœur.*' Try that; it is very easy."

Gyneth's voice was scarcely strong enough for a second song, nor did she care for this French air, and at another time would have thought the words great rubbish; but now the

"Souffre en silence, et dévore tes larmes,
Tais-toi, mon cœur, mon pauvre cœur, tais-toi,"

seemed rather congenial counsel.

Lambert came in while she was singing, looking as if he had something to ask, but accepted the "tais-toi" as an admonition to silence, and refrained from interrupting. Gyneth hurried through the last verse, and closed it abruptly.

"Do you want anything, Bertie?" she inquired, going up to him.

"Yes, I am come to make a claim on your industry, if you don't mind. I made acquaintance with a poor little boy the other day, who said he would like to come to the Sunday school, only his clothes were too ragged. I mentioned it to Mr. Weatherhead, and Miss Weatherhead has made him a neat little tunic; but it seems that, though big enough otherwise, the arm-holes are so tight that he can't get it on. He has no kind mother

or friend to alter it for him, and does not like to complain to 'the Rector's young lady' that her work doesn't fit; so he has come to me in his dilemma."

"Oh, I see; where is the little garment? And the poor child, is he here? Shall I speak to him?"

She was quite animated already; real useful work was so much more cheering than doing nothing except devouring her tears, or some such woe-begone occupation.

She went out into the passage, where the child was standing; a ragged little mortal enough, but with a capital pair of strong new boots on, which he seemed to be contemplating with peculiar satisfaction.

"Did Miss Weatherhead give you those?" asked Gyneth, when she had examined the ill-fitting tunic.

"No, 'im give me them," replied the child, whose phraseology was not of the most grammatical description; and a finger pointed at Lambert indicated the "'im" in question.

Gyneth gave her brother a radiant look, and gratified the child by warm admiration of his *chausseure*. Half-an-hour's steady work rectified the mistake in the structure of the little coat; and, meantime, Lambert patiently superintended the urchin in spelling his way through "John is a good man," "I have a big dog," and divers other easy sentences, suitable for novices in the art of reading.

It chanced that, in the course of their afternoon walk, Gyneth and Lambert met Augusta Weatherhead and her father, and joined company with them; and Augusta took occasion to inform "Mr. Deshon" that she had bestowed a tunic on his protégé, and that she had just seen him in it, "looking quite respectable."

"It really fits remarkably well, too," said Mr. Weatherhead, smiling; "my little girl may begin to reckon tailoring among her accomplishments, may she not?"

Gyneth looked studiously away from Lambert, and inquired politely if this were Miss Weatherhead's first experiment in the art.

"Oh, no, I have made several little coats lately," replied Miss Gussie.—Gyneth secretly hoped that they were not *all* too small in the arm-holes.—"Perhaps you don't patronise that kind of work, Miss Deshon?"

"It is not in your line, I suppose?" said Mr. Weatherhead; goodnaturedly, but rather as if he imagined her to be a helpless fine lady.

She was too gentle to be indignant at the imputation, too proud to defend herself from it. "I cannot pretend to any peculiar skill in needlework, certainly," she answered, slightly smiling.

Mr. Weatherhead turned to Lambert with some comment on Mr. Parry and his plans, and Augusta and Gyneth walked on together.

"What *do* you do all day, Miss Deshon?" inquired Gussie. "I am so curious to know what a young lady's life is like under ordinary circumstances."

"Too commonplace to be worth describing, if I may take mine as the type," replied Gyneth; "so much reading, so much walking, so much talking, and so much working, with music and visitors to fill up the intervals."

"But no doubt, as the eldest daughter, you must be very useful."

"No," said Gyneth, quietly.

"And you know a great many languages, and read a great many deep books, don't you?"

"No," said Gyneth, again.

Augusta was puzzled, and mused for a moment

in silence. Then she said, abruptly, "Do you know, Miss Deshon, I heard that you were very clever, and that you had an exceedingly clever cousin, a lawyer, who made you read all sorts of difficult books with him, and discussed politics with you."

"I have a clever cousin," said Gyneth, laughing, though a little confusedly, "but he is not very partial to feminine politicians, and I don't think ever tried to make me one."

"He is your first cousin, is he not?"

"Oh, no, fourth or fifth, something almost beyond reckoning, as we are not Irish."

Augusta apparently noted down this fact in her memory, and then went on,

"How delightful it must be to have leisure for cultivating one's mind! I never seem to have time for reading, especially when Geoffrey is at home, as he is now. Not that I begrudge the time I spend on *him*," she added, hastily.

"Oh, I am sure you do not! Poor little fellow! it must be a pleasure to feel you are so useful to him. May I come and see him some day? or does he dislike strangers?"

"Not at all: I am sure he will be delighted to see you. He judges of people by the voice; and yours is so soft, it will be certain to please him. Do pray come and see us soon."

"Perhaps you will come and take tea with my little girl, some night? She would enjoy that, would you not, Gussie?" said Mr. Weatherhead, turning round. "We are going home to tea now; could you come with us at once?"

"You forget that Miss Deshon hasn't dined yet, papa," said Augusta, frowning at him; such an unceremonious invitation did not at all accord with her notions of propriety.

"Oh, that would not matter in the least," said

Gyneth, "but unfortunately we expect some friends to dinner to-day, and mamma would not like me to be absent."

"Would to-morrow suit you better?" pursued Mr. Weatherhead, innocently unconscious of his daughter's objections.

"Thank you," hesitated Gyneth, apologetically; "but I believe I am engaged to an evening party at the Estcourts."

"And the next evening your concert at the messroom is to come off, is it not? How gay you military people are!" said the Rector, laughing. "I see it is useless to press you to name a day; we must content ourselves with a general invitation, must we not, Gussie?"

"I have not often so many engagements, indeed," said Gyneth. "We have many quiet weeks, have we not, Bertie?"

But the Rector shook his head with a good-natured incredulous smile, and Gyneth felt that he esteemed her a very dissipated young lady indeed. He was less likely than ever to enlist her among his workers; she seemed positively doomed to uselessness. The Guerillas would have welcomed her into *their* ranks certainly; but then both her principles and her sympathies forbade her to join them. The "active duties," the "matters of obedience," which were to help her to turn visions into realities, had not come before her yet, or she thought they had not; and the daily course of her life seemed to her so frivolous, that to look forward to a continuance of it was positive pain.

"You look tired, Gyneth," said her brother, as they turned homewards; "I am afraid we have walked too far."

"Oh, no, indeed, it is not that, and I was so glad to take this walk with you; we so seldom have a *tête-à-tête*, and now that you are going away,

too. But the fact is, Bertie, I am tired of everything."

He looked so astonished, that she felt ashamed of having made such an avowal.

"I suppose it is naughty of me to say such a thing, and still more to feel it; but yet, tell me honestly, can I, ought I to be satisfied with my outward life, such as it is now?"

"I should hope not," he said so quaintly, that she smiled; but she saw he had not taken "satisfied" in the sense she meant.

"I know," she went on, "one ought not to be so satisfied with any phase of earthly life as not to yearn towards something better; but I mean that my present mode of existence does not satisfy my ideas of right, does not approve itself to my conscience."

"Do you mean that you feel you are not thoroughly fulfilling its duties,—not 'turning all tasks to charity,' as one should do? Yes, I know that feeling, and how weary it makes one of oneself."

"No, I didn't mean that, though I have felt that too. What I meant was, that I *have* no real duties, or next to none."

His look of wonderment was as grave, and quite as innocent as little Edgar's, she felt indescribably rebuked by it.

"How do you define duty?" he inquired, in a puzzled tone.

"Doing what one ought, what one knows to be right, not thinking of pleasure, or letting oneself be drifted about by circumstances—but I know that is not a real definition, tell me exactly what you think about it."

"I cannot pretend to make a clear definition either, but our own individual duty seems to me to consist in keeping strictly in the path of 'good

works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in,' not making work, in short, but accepting it as it comes before us."

"And sitting with one's hands before one until it does come! Bertie, I don't understand that, how would many of the noble things that have been done have been accomplished, if people had waited till circumstances pointed them out as necessary?"

"I wasn't thinking of circumstances only," said Lambert, quietly.

"I beg your pardon," she said with humility, "I was too hasty; tell me what is your ideal of a life of real duty?"

"You remind me of the words of a French writer, who also quotes the text I have just alluded to, 'nous sommes tous portés de nous faire un idéal de la vie chrétienne,' but is it not almost better to have no ideal, but to trace out that life step by step according as we are guided?"

"And not to dramatise one's life to oneself as one is too apt to do, but to go on simply from hour to hour, only recalling the past so as to be penitent for its shortcomings, and not thinking what one will do in the future, but putting all one's might into one's present task! Yes, you are right, Bertie, that is the best way of living, and George Herbert, you know, has told us that we should be happy

'If though thou didst not beat thy future brow,
Thou couldst well see
What present things required of thee,'

but sometimes one's heart sickens of those 'present things!'

"Our 'present thing' should be to hasten home," said Lambert, showing her his watch; "papa will not like us to be late."

"No, and I am glad obedience is such a plain duty, one must at least be right in that!"

"And you will help to keep up obedience among the younger ones," said Lambert; "I am so glad to know that."

"I will try; but, Bertie, don't expect too much from my influence, it will never be half so potent as yours; I should be happier if I felt I could be of use to the little ones, but I can't, I am of no use to anybody now, since I have left grandmamma, whose love made my little services valuable."

That forlorn lonely feeling at her heart gave to her words a deeper regret than she had intended, and Lambert looked quite concerned.

"You must not fancy we do not value you, Gyneth," he said, "nor underrate your influence with the children."

"No, no," she said; "you think too well of me; do not please fancy I imagined myself 'unappreciated.' I mean that I cannot do good to any one, because I am not good myself, and I do not always even see clearly where the right is, so how can I help others to find it?"

"But you *will* see, though," he answered; "for you are not wilfully blind: and Gyneth, do not despair, for—let me say it—'Such as are gentle them shall He learn His way.'"



CHAPTER XVI.

"Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice;
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice."

LONGFELLOW.

HE regimental concert proved a most brilliant success, and the Rosses and Mr. Armstrong were so happy in their triumph that it was impossible not to sympathize with them. Gyneth, though under her mother's careful chaperonage, sat near enough to Photinée to be the recipient of her expressions of delight as one performer after another got creditably through his part, and Mrs. Deshon even allowed herself to be beguiled into letting Gyneth and her brothers join a supper-party at the Rosses' afterwards. A very merry party it was, for all the guests were young, and most of them in high spirits; even Anthony condescended to be sociable, and Gyneth found herself stimulated by the general atmosphere of drollery into a little shy fun which was the more appreciated as coming from a damsel so habitually grave in demeanour. She would not have had courage for it if Lambert had not been beside her, but while his quiet smile followed up her words, she felt secure of not having

gone too far, and if he would only have talked a little more himself, she would have been quite content.

She made an engagement with Photinée that evening to read "Idylls of the King" (which had but lately appeared) with her, and on the afternoon of the day on which Lambert returned to college, she set forth with little Edgar for the Rosses' house. She found Photinée reclining on some cushions spread in the balcony of a back window which overlooked the rector's garden, and there she herself was soon likewise installed, while Edgar after listening for a time very patiently to the adventures of Enid and Geraint, was at length attracted by a telegraphic invitation from Horace Weatherhead, and obtained leave from his sister to go round and join him.

Gyneth and her friend gave but one glance at the disagreeable "Vivien," and then by mutual consent passed on to "Elaine;" they read aloud by turns, sitting close together so that both could see the book, Photinée's left arm round Gyneth's waist, and the two graceful heads so close to one another that the black and brown hair mingled. Gyneth was the reader when they came to those words of Elaine's—

"Not to be with you, not to see your face;
Alas for me then, my good days are done."

And unconsciously she emphasized Lancelot's reply—

"'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay,
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea I know it of mine own self:
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age.'"

"Pity it didn't turn out so," said a frank voice from the room behind her, and turning round she saw Mr. Armstrong standing near the window.

"Yes, she dies, doesn't she? She is the same as the Lady of Shallot I suppose?" said Gyneth, ignoring the conventional "how-d'y-e-do" in the interest of the subject.

"Exactly; you will hear how 'Death like a friend's voice from a distant field approaching through the darkness called,' the description of her floating down the river in the barge 'palled with blackest samite' is the prettiest part, pray go on to it, don't let me interrupt."

"Then sit down and be quiet," said Mrs. Ross, in a playfully imperious manner, "we can't spare you any cushions, but you may take that ottoman. Now, ma mie, go on."

But Gyneth had no mind to read, now that her audience was increased, so Photinée took the book and read a few lines here and there, making poor Elaine and her father and brother speak like foreigners, till she saw Mr. Armstrong smiling, whereupon she insisted on his turning reader himself.

He gave with all due pathos the passage—

"Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as though she smiled."

Winding up, however, with—"Miss Deshon, do you think she had any business to die?"

Gyneth's "no," was interrupted by Photinée,

who eagerly exclaimed, "Of course she had, her's was a 'gran passione,' what could she do but die, poor thing? You are too prosaic, Mr. Armstrong."

"Am I? No, I don't think so, for I can see that Miss Deshon agrees with me; she'd have done a great deal better to have gone on making her father's tea,"—"What an anachronism! they didn't drink tea in those days," murmured Gyneth deprecatingly,—"and nursing poor wounded Sir Torre, wouldn't she now, Miss Deshon?"

"Yes," said Gyneth, "it was cowardly to die; I do not like her half so well as Enid."

"Ah, I was sure you would not. If she had married somebody else now like a sensible maiden."

But Gyneth and Photinée both exclaimed against this.

"There was no need for her to marry at all," said Gyneth. "She ought to have had courage to live single, and content herself with her father's and her brother's love."

"But could she do that?" exclaimed Photinée. "Ah, no, my little Gyneth, who could have courage to live as a forsaken maiden? I am sure I could not, could you?"

Gyneth's colour came involuntarily, a vivid scarlet glow, so palpable that Mr. Armstrong hastened to say warmly, "Miss Deshon will never be put to the test, I am sure."

"Present company are always excepted, you know," said Gyneth recovering herself, "and we are talking not of any real person—but of Elaine, who after all was not a forsaken maiden, for Lancelot was never hers at all except in her own fancy. If she had had more pride she would have been so angry with herself for her mistake that her loneliness afterwards would only have seemed fitting penance."

" Which would have made her more uncomfortable than ever, poor thing ! Miss Deshon, you are very stern, remember ' pride in love ' was not thought of in those days ; Griselda and all those old heroines haven't a scrap of pride among them."

" No, that is true ; I never liked Griselda till I read Halm's version of her story in his play of ' Grisildis,' he has given her that degree of self-respect which is I suppose the right form of pride."

" I thought pride was wrong altogether," said Mr. Armstrong ; " except to be sure one hears of ' proper pride,' is that the same as your ' self-respect,' Miss Deshon ?"

" I suppose so, and whatever it may be called, I think it a very necessary quality."

" And you think no woman who possesses it need succumb beneath a disappointment ? You despise those who do ?"

" I don't believe they exist ; women, English-women at any rate, are not so weak as poets and romance writers would make them out. I am disappointed in Tennyson, I thought he at least would have scorned to take such a silly heroine for his theme."

" Ah, you are a cold northern !" said Photinée, shaking her head at Gyneth. " She has not one bit of romance in her composition, Mr. Armstrong ; positively she read those lines

‘ She lifted up her eyes
And loved him with that love which was her doom,’

as drily as if they had been a sentence in the newspaper, and then she pursed up her little mouth disdainfully, and said, ' What nonsense ! ' Ah we shall see, she will not say that always !'

" Shall I not ?" said Gyneth smiling, and as she saw Mr. Armstrong's eye fixed on her, as well as

Photinée's, she fronted them both serenely with the same brave smile of innocence.

Then she rose up and said she must summon Edgar, for it was time to go home.

"No, no, no, you must not go yet," cried Photinée eagerly, "see now, I have a charming plan. Frederick is going to dine at mess to-night, to meet some naval friends of his, so you and the dear little one shall stay with me, and we will ask all the little Weatherheads to come in and have a 'severe tea' with us; the poor blind child likes to hear me sing, and you shall play to him, and we will be so happy. You cannot have the heart to say '*no*' to me, though you *are* such a stern wise lady!"

"But I must, I am afraid," said Gyneth. "Papa would not like me to stay out so long without having settled it beforehand, they will think Eddie and I are lost, and be coming to look for us."

"But you shall write a note and tell them where you are. Yes, now, do be kind; only think how dull that poor little Miss Weatherhead is! There she has been for the last half hour walking up and down beside her brother's wheeled chair, and stretching up her neck to look at us, thinking us highly improper, I daresay."

Gyneth's eyes asked why so innocently that Mrs. Ross laughed.

"Ah, it is you she is wondering at! She can't think how you can sit and read poetry with a misguided little foreigner and a young officer, instead of making useful clothes—oh such ugly ones! for all the poor children. We must ask her to bring in some work this evening, and a volume of Mr. Pusey's. Or is she not in that line? I always forget."

"You are very naughty, Photinée," said Gyneth. "I shall not lend you that book of Dr. Pusey's that you asked me for, if you make such malicious remarks."

"Yes, yes, you will, you are a darling. Now, come, write your note, and one of the servants shall take it. Perhaps I had better go and ask the rest of my company; for if my little Horace comes he will want some 'jolly tarts' and things, and I must send for some."

"Then you will want your servant to go into the town; so I shall take Miss Deshon's note," said Mr. Armstrong.

"Oh, no, thank you," said Gyneth, laying down the pen; "and now I think of it, Photinée, there will be time for Edgar and me to go home and speak to mamma, and come back to tea, that will be much the best plan."

But Photinée would not hear of this; she hid away Gyneth's bonnet with the air of a mischievous kitten, and domineered over the conclusion of the note with such pretty caressing sauciness, that it was impossible to be provoked with her.

"I am so sorry to trouble you," said Gyneth, apologetically, as Mr. Armstrong held out his hand for the note.

"Do you think it is anything but a pleasure?" he answered, with the most direct look of admiration that she had ever received from him.

"You are very kind," she replied, with rather distant politeness.

He went on his errand, and Mrs. Ross flitted off to the rector's to give her invitation, returning ere long with the announcement that Miss Weatherhead would be very happy; and thought she might answer for her father's consent to the little ones being of the party also.

"They begged to keep Edgar until nearer tea-time; so I said he might stay," concluded Photinée. "I thought you wouldn't mind, and I can enjoy a little quiet talk with you now that we have got rid of poor Mr. Armstrong. Tell me, how is the dear grandmamma? I was disap-

pointed in the cousin, he was not half so lively as I expected."

"No, he was graver than usual that evening. I think he was preoccupied. Grandmamma is quite well, I had a letter from her this morning. A Mrs. Willis, a mother of one of the minor canons, is just come to stay with him, and is making a great sensation in the Close. Grandmamma says she has taken a great fancy to Rose, and they are constantly together; but I don't think granny quite fancies her, and she says Lewis doesn't like her at all."

"Ah, he is fastidious, the cousin, I could see that. I don't think he liked me; he treated me only to his company smile, and surface conversation; little Miss Burnaby seemed to be the favourite."

"Yes, he likes her very much. I hope you were pleased with her, Photinée? I wanted you to like her."

"Ah, so I do, she is very bright, and like one of your wild roses; but Gyneth, I am vexed with that cousin, he has no eyes!"

"For you?" said Gyneth, taking refuge in jest. "It was very stupid of him not to admire you certainly; but, indeed, I did not think you had been so vain."

"Naughty child!" said Mrs. Ross, "you know very well what I mean, but I will not tease you. I want to read you a letter from my sister, my little Avoola. Ah! it looks unintelligible, does it not? but I will translate."

The letter was chiefly about one 'Marco,' a brother of Photinée's, who seemed from what Avoola said to be in a state of serious discontent, and very much inclined to join in a conspiracy for procuring the independence of the Ionian Isles.

"You see," explained Photinée, breaking off,

"my poor Marco is about twenty, very handsome, very clever, very strong, with the heart of a patriot, were he born an Englishman he would make a name for himself, but our young Greeks have no future, no outlet for their ambition ; to live poor and idle on their little estates, or to become rich traders, is the only prospect they have : what are the grand ambitious hearts to do ? They either grow cold and hard, or break with disappointment."

"That is very sad," said Gyneth, with real interest ; "can nothing be done to help it ? Could not your brother come to England ? There might be some opening for him."

"That is just what Frederick proposes, and I mean to write and urge it, my Marco must not be left to ruin ; but I doubt if he will come, and he is only one among many ; even in my own family there are five sons, Avoola and I are the only daughters."

"And are you the eldest ?"

"Yes ; she is only fifteen, but she is wise and good, far, far better than I. I should like to have her to stay with me, but she cannot be spared. Frederick has sent for my two little brothers, Anastatius and Stephanos, he is going to put them to school here in England, and he wants Marco to come over with them. He is so good to me ! he has made my people his !"

The eyes full of happy and grateful tears were so sweet that Gyneth felt almost vexed at the gathering dimness which made the lovely face opposite to her so indistinctly visible ; they had withdrawn from the balcony and closed the window, for mild as was the October afternoon, now that evening was approaching the air was too damp for comfort. So they sat together on the sofa in the dusky twilight, Photinée describing her Cephalonian home with its simple pleasures and

deep anxieties and sorrows, Gyneth listening with eager sympathetic interest, till the two were as completely friends as though they had known each other from childhood, except that the confidence was not mutual, for Gyneth though receiving it gladly had given none in return. But yes, she had made one avowal, she had told of her letter to the newspaper in behalf of the Greeks and Mr. Gladstone, and in repeating its contents to Photinée and hearing her delighted enthusiastic comments, she had forgotten to say that she was very much ashamed of it, and very sorry she had ever written it.

Presently the door opened, and some one entered with a light; it was Captain Ross, and with him was Mr. Armstrong.

"I have done your commission," said the latter gentleman to Gyneth, "though I did not go to your house, for I met the Colonel half way, and he told me that Mrs. Deshon was out, and said I might give the note to him. He had no objection to your staying with Mrs. Ross, and begged me to tell you that he would send the carriage for you at nine o'clock."

"Much too early," said Photinée.

"So I told him, but he said something about 'liking early hours,' and 'his little boy's bedtime,' so I could not venture on any further remonstrance."

"O, thank you, Mr. Armstrong, I am much obliged to you," said Gyneth, "you will have had quite enough of us by nine o'clock, Photinée."

"No indeed, that will still leave me a solitary hour or two before Captain Ross comes back. What a tardy messenger you are, Mr. Armstrong, you have been away quite a long time."

"Ah, but the delay was 'no for naething.' I have been home to my quarters, and in to the town, and see what I have brought!"

He borrowed Captain Ross's candlestick, and displayed by its light a pile of small circular pink boxes, which on being opened, proved to be full of the choicest crystallized sweetmeats. "Do you think Master Horace will find these jolly?" he inquired.

"I should rather think so," said Captain Ross, helping himself to some, and holding out one at a little distance, from his wife's mouth, as if she were a singing-bird whom he was enticing with sugar. "Armstrong is a wise man, and knows who likes sugarplums."

"You shall have a whole box for yourself, Mrs. Ross," said Mr. Armstrong, laughing, "but I want to make a scramble with the rest, if you don't mind."

"*You* want! you will be safe at mess by the time tea is over, and I can't let you do it before tea, for you will spoil the children's appetites."

"But I'm not going to mess, I'm going to be a good little boy, and have tea with you, please."

"*Est-il possible?* After getting my own mankind safely out of the way, and thinking I was going to enjoy myself in peace, here comes another man and says he's going to stay to tea with me! It's too bad, I *won't* be hospitable, I'll be cross and disagreeable, and say you *shan't* stay."

"O, but do let me, please, Ross said I might," urged Mr. Armstrong, in a piteous, babyish, pleading tone, irresistibly comic; "Miss Deshon, do intercede for me."

"No. I think you ought to go to mess," Gy-neth answered smiling.

"You'd better come, Armstrong," said Captain Ross, "they're going to have milk and water and thick bread and butter, you may depend. That's the orthodox juvenile fare, isn't it? and if you're wise you'll steer clear of it."

"No, I like it, thank you," said the young officer, seating himself on the ottoman, which seemed especially appropriated to him, and holding up the box of sweetmeats to Mrs. Ross. "I'm going to make a compact, and seal it with bonbons, it is that I am to be considered as a little boy for this evening,—only exempt from pinafores, please!—and to be allowed to 'behave as sich,' petted and patronized if I am good, and turned out of the room if I am 'naughty.' "

"Then is it to be Master Armstrong, or Master Francis?" inquired Mrs. Ross maliciously.

"No, simply Frank, Miss Edgeworth's good little boy, you know, whom everybody likes; there, I knew you would be kind and let me stay, I am so much obliged to you," and he really looked quite grateful.

"Very well, now that affair's settled, I'll go and dress," said Captain Ross; "good-bye, Frank, behave pretty, my dear; I trust to you, Miss Deshon, to keep him in order."

He went away, and after ringing for lights, and begging Gyneth to excuse her for a minute, his wife followed him.

Gyneth took up a half-finished slipper which lay on the table, and worked away industriously, talking the while on general subjects; till, as Mr. Armstrong handed her a skein of floss silk which she had dropped, he said, "Do you like that pattern? I chose it, Mrs. Ross gave me a number to choose from, and I thought this the prettiest, but I am sorry to say she finds it a very troublesome one."

"Is it for you, then?" said Gyneth, in surprise, "I thought it was for Captain Ross."

"I shouldn't have told you, but—I—I mean—I shall like it so much better now!"

"Not if I put in the wrong shade of silk, as I

really believe I am doing," said Gyneth, "however, it will be easily unpicked."

"Oh don't, please, I would so much rather have it left as it is."

"But so would not I," replied Gyneth, trying to laugh off her embarrassment, "for I meant to help Mrs. Ross in her work, not to spoil it; you can find the right shade, please, while I unpick this."

She gave him the box of silks, and applied herself to the task of undoing what she had done, while he eyed her ruefully as if each stitch that was taken away were the withdrawing of a personal favour.

Poor fellow! it is to be feared that she thought him very silly, and was rather glad that the arrival of the tea-tray gave her an excuse for putting away the work altogether, just as the right silk was found.





CHAPTER XVII.

"I'll tell thee, for thy sake I will lay hold of all good aims."
FRANCES BUTLER.

ENTER a train of small Weatherheads; first, Miss Gussie, leading by the hand poor little Geoffrey, a thin pale child, with wide open eyes which only the want of expression betrayed to be sightless, then Horace and the tiny one of all, then Nelly and Kitty, two rosy little maidens; and lastly, the youngest boy and his twin sister, accompanied by Edgar Deshon. Mrs. Alban Ross had insisted on having the whole party, though Augusta rather deprecated her entertaining "such a host," and had warned her that the little ones were very troublesome, "for poor papa was so indulgent he quite spoiled them all."

Mr. Armstrong redeemed his credit in Gyneth's eyes by the kindness with which he took the little blind boy under his protection, and the unwearyed activity and goodhumour which he showed in supplying all the manifold wants of the youthful guests; cutting cake, spreading jam, sugaring milk and water, and tying pinnafores as deftly as if he had served an apprenticeship in a well populated nursery.

"You are quite *au fait* at children's tea-parties, I see," she observed to him, as he helped her to pile cushions on a chair so as to bring little Mary Weatherhead on a level with the table.

"Why, the fact is, I have two or three little sisters, who are usually ignored by their elders, and kept in durance vile by a nurse and a governess, so whenever I am at home I make it my business to fête the small creatures, and find out what pleases them. I should like you to see the eldest, my sister Angela, she is a perfect little beauty."

Augusta was rather surprised at finding a young officer of the party, and assumed a little additional dignity in consequence of his presence, looking scandalised when Mrs. Ross called him "Frank," and allowed him to pour out the tea for her, and contemptuous when she saw how he hung upon Gyneth's words, and followed her admiringly with his eyes as she flitted about among the little ones.

"Papa is so sorry to lose your brother, Miss Deshon," she remarked while they were still gathered round the tea-table, "he says he was quite invaluable at the night-school, and he cannot find any one to replace him. He and Mr. Mayhew—the curate—will have to do all the teaching themselves now, and that is very hard upon them. I think it is almost a pity papa undertook the scheme."

"Oh, but it was so good of him, and we may hope it will be really of use to the poor boys," said Gyneth: "will no one come forward to help? surely there must be some who are willing."

"A Mr. Morgan, the son of a banker in the town, did say he might perhaps manage to come on Wednesdays; but papa can get no one to take the Friday evening class that your brother had."

"Lambert liked it so much, he was quite sorry to have to give it up so soon, but there is some-

thing of the same kind at Cambridge, and he has been asked to take a class there. However, that will not help the school here; I am so sorry, I wish I were a man! Some more honey did you say, Nelly?"

She jumped up to get it, but Mr. Armstrong was beforehand with her, and as he put the honey into the plate she held, he contrived to say in a low voice, "Miss Deshon, will it do as well if there is a man ready to undertake all you would wish to do if *you* were a man?"

"I don't understand," she said timidly; "thank you, that is enough for Nelly," and she went back to her place.

But the next time he had an excuse for coming near her, he went on, "What should you say if I offered myself as a teacher at the night school?"

"That it would most likely be a welcome assistance to Mr. Weatherhead," she replied.

"And what reward would you give me for acting in obedience to your wish? I should not ask much, the least kind word would be sufficient."

His eagerness made her shy and vexed her, but recovering herself she laughed with merry mischief and said, "I should show you a sentence in Edgar's copybook, 'Virtue is its own reward!'"

The honest open face became so downcast that she felt afraid she had been rude and added hastily, "Mr. Armstrong, I mean that to do right things, good things, makes one so happy that one *wants* no other recompense. If you really think of teaching in the night school, I am sure it must be from a better motive than a wish to please me or anybody else."

He looked half-acquiescent at her first sentence, but her last words brought a look of inexpressible mortification. He turned abruptly away, and proposed a game of dominoes with Horace and Kitty,

not speaking to Gyneth again for some minutes, or venturing on any more allusions to the night school, till quite towards the end of the evening.

Augusta began to take him into favour, and moderated her rather sharp orders to the children, when she saw how they astonished him, and how perfectly courteous he was himself to even the very least of the little ones. He was a great strong man, but as gentle as a woman—more gentle than many women it might be added—and was the most delightful playmate that the children could have had, for he seemed not to have a thought of his own dignity, and lent himself goodnaturedly to all their fun, even obliging Horace by acting “Gulliver and the Lilliputians,” lying down upon the ground, and letting the children swarm over him, only mildly remonstrating when little Mary set her foot upon his face.

When they were quite tired out with romps he quieted them all, and seated them in a row with demure Edgar at their head, to listen to Mrs. Ross’s singing.

Geoffrey lay on a couch near the piano, and it was beautiful to see the sudden lighting up of his face at the first notes of Photinée’s song. She had never sung more brilliantly than she did now to this youthful audience, and occasionally Mr. Armstrong’s deep bass was made effective in a duett.

Meantime Gyneth and Augusta Weatherhead sitting together beside Geoffrey’s couch, were steadily endeavouring to become better acquainted, though there was so little affinity in their tastes and opinions, that an increase of intimacy did not seem likely to be productive of much pleasure to either.

“As you are so anxious to be of use, Miss Deshon, why don’t you ask papa to give you a district?” said Augusta patronisingly; “I know he

is in want of some lady-visitors now, for there are one or two particularly *good* districts vacant, and such as a lady *can* go to."

"I think I would rather have a particularly *bad* one, if I were a visitor," said Gyneth impulsively, then seeing Augusta's look of horror, and feeling that her hasty words were likely to be misconstrued, she added blushing, "I mean the bad people want helping the most, the good can do without us, know better than we—at least than I—do most likely; but I am merely speaking theoretically, I have only visited a very little, under grand-mamma's direction, I shouldn't be fit, I am afraid, to take a district, and I am sure papa would not let me."

"Oh, of course then it is out of the question," said Miss Gussie in her superior tone, "but it never occurred to me that you would think yourself too young, I am accustomed to visit poor people constantly, and I am more than two years younger than you, I confess I don't see any such great difficulty in it."

"But then Mr. Weatherhead no doubt goes with you very often, and you can always go to him for advice, and get him to tell you what to do and say,"—Augusta be it observed looked slightly insulted at this supposition—"that makes it so different; and besides, though you are younger I daresay you have more judgment and experience than I, I have never had to act on my own responsibility much, I should be afraid of making mistakes."

To Gussie such a fear was incomprehensible, she began to think Gyneth very foolish.

"And yet you said if you had a district you should like it to be a very bad one!" she observed with innumerable notes of exclamation in her voice.

Gyneth felt the shame well known to sensitive people when they have uttered something which they had better have kept to themselves, and which they find it impossible to explain to their auditor's satisfaction. "I did not mean—I was not thinking of pleasure—," she faltered, "only, that, one longs to do something for bad people. But I know it is not for girls like me to attempt it, we should only do harm."

She broke off, unwilling to confide more of her real meaning to so unsympathising a listener, but her heightened colour and eager mournful eyes attracted Photinée's attention, and coming to her and leaning over her caressingly, she inquired, "What are you grieving your little heart about now, carissima? you will make yourself old before your time if you think so much."

"No fear of that," said Gyneth, summoning a smile, "but we shall make this little man sad with our grave talk: you would like another song, wouldn't you, Geoffrey?"

"Mrs. Ross said you could play," replied the child, "would you please play a *sweet* tune? not drum, drum and then a buzz."

"A most graphic description of some people's music, but not of yours, Miss Deshon, I can answer for it," laughed Mr. Armstrong, and Gyneth went to the piano and played from memory such sweet simple melodies as she thought most likely to please poor little Geoffrey, unconscious that Augusta mentally stigmatized them as "easy little things, which any baby could play."

After this, the children were enticed into renewed romps by a shower of sweetmeats, for which they scrambled as eagerly and merrily as Mr. Armstrong could possibly desire. Even the quiet Edgar took a prominent share in the scramble, and being very fond of sweet things, was about to cram

some of his spoils into his mouth at once, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and jumping up, he offered all that he had collected to Geoffrey, pressing them into his hand with a cordial invitation to "eat them all up, every bit."

"I told Bertie I never would be greedy any more," he whispered, as Gyneth kissed him, and insisted on his sharing with her from a handful which Mr. Armstrong had given her; and she thought him so very good that perhaps she showed it more than was quite wise.

A less blindly-admiring sister might have been pained by the unchildlike gravity of his thoughts and ways, as compared with those of the other children, and even the partial Gyneth would have been glad to see more heartiness in his play, and a more companionable disposition altogether. He joined gravely in the game of "I have a little dog, and it shan't bite you," which Mr. Armstrong set going when the sweetmeats were disposed of, and danced contentedly round in the ring, keeping fast hold of Gyneth's hand, till at length the handkerchief being dropped on his arm with the words "*it shall* bite you," he was obliged to leave the circle and take his turn in announcing the intentions of the supposititious "little dog." He walked round at a measured pace, which did not suit the lively Horace, and so aggravated Augusta by thinking it necessary to preface every announcement of "it shan't bite you" with the repetition of "I have a little dog" that at length she exclaimed impatiently, "You needn't say that every time, Edgar, you can say it once for all, it makes the game so dreadfully tedious," whereupon the little gentleman blushed rosy red, and dropping the handkerchief on the floor, retreated from the game altogether, observing in a quiet dignified voice, "I shan't play now."

"Hush, Eddie," said Gyneth, "you don't mean that, come back, darling, we are waiting for you." But the little fellow did not move, and going up to him she whispered a more earnest remonstrance. It was of no use, he steadfastly declined to play any more, and she could see that the refusal proceeded quite as much from pride as shyness. Nor was it of any avail that Mr. Armstrong and Mrs. Ross added their intreaties to hers: he remained obstinate, and Gyneth went back to the game, ashamed of his perverseness, and yet not willing to own that he was in fault. She felt almost indignant with Horace's blunt "Let him alone, he'll be all right when he's sulked a little, and then we'll have some jolly game that he'll like," and though she tried to join heartily in the play for the sake of the other children, her eyes would keep turning wistfully to where the obstinate little brother sat in his offended dignity. Mr. Armstrong thought such sweet sisterliness very charming; tenderness towards little children, animals, and all weak dependent creatures formed a marked quality in his ideal of perfect womanhood, if Gyneth had scolded Edgar after Augusta Weatherhead's fashion, his admiration for her would have been incalculably lessened.

As it was he approached her, and said in his frank pleasant voice, "Miss Deshon, I am beginning to see that I deserved a reproof for what I said about the night-school, and I freely give up all pretensions to a reward, but you know the sturdy old Northmen did not disdain to owe their best inspirations to their women, so I hope you will allow me to be glad that I derived this good impulse from you."

"Then you really mean to teach?" she said, looking up with such manifest interest as gratified him, though it was chiefly for the school's sake.

"Yes, if Mr. Weatherhead will have me, and cannot find anybody better, but I should have thought that Parry,—"

"Papa did mention the subject to Mr. Parry," said Augusta, whose quick ear had overheard what was not precisely meant for her, "but he said he had something of his own, which he called 'a Bible class,' on Friday evenings, and did not wish to give that up."

"It's a pity he's so independent," said Mr. Armstrong, who could not but perceive that the zeal of his brother officer outran his discretion; "he would be a splendid fellow if he were not so self-opinionated, one can't help honouring him when one sees how steadily he keeps to what he thinks right without minding all the quizzing he gets, not to mention harder trials."

"Will they not quiz *you* if you teach in this school?" inquired Mrs. Ross.

"Oh, but no person of common sense would mind that," exclaimed Augusta.

"Then I am deficient in that article," said the candid Mr. Armstrong, "for I *do* mind being quizzed, there is nothing I dislike more: however, fortunately one is not obliged to give way to one's little weaknesses."

"Have you ever taught in a school before?" inquired Augusta, with a business-like air, as if she felt bound to examine into the capabilities of this aspirant for parish employment.

"Once, when I was at home for a time, waiting to be nominated to a regiment, I taught in the school which my father has established for the lads in his factory."

"Oh!" an expressive "oh," betraying intense astonishment at such a voluntary allusion to the paternal button-maker.

Gyneth, who thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Arm-

strong's honesty, smiled brightly, and said, "Then you have the advantage of some previous experience; that will make you all the more useful."

So he had won "the kind word" after all! Perhaps he derived more encouragement from it than was meant, for his attentions became so pointed that Gyneth could no longer fail to understand them. She grew shy and confused again, and was glad when the arrival of the carriage put an end to them for the evening, though Edgar had not yet redeemed his credit in the eyes of his little companions by becoming "all right" again as Horace had predicted; and the good sister was ashamed of the sullen nod which was all the farewell he deigned to bestow on Augusta Weatherhead. She did not take the opportunity of their being alone together during the drive home to upbraid him, but when a little later he came to her room to bid her good-night, as she was taking off her bonnet, she said kindly, "Dear Eddie, 'sister' could not help being sorry to see you so ready to take offence; you will think of it when you say your prayers by-and-by, will you not?"

He hid his face in her shawl in a passion of tears, and when she tried to kiss him ran away to his own room. Poor little man! she felt sure that the next letter to Lambert would contain terrible self-accusations, and wished she had known how to spare him them by checking his little fit of naughtiness in the beginning, as Bertie would have done.

On descending to the drawing-room she found her father reading at the table, her mother nursing a headache on the sofa, and Lawrence sitting by the fire looking particularly bored. Clearly something had gone wrong with him, and Gyneth looked from him to her father, and wondered to herself whether the slight frown on Colonel De-

shon's brow, and the half-stern, half-sad expression round his mouth, had any connection with Lawrence's ill humour, or were merely the result of a perusal of the first volume of "Froude's History of England." She went softly behind him, and peeped over his shoulder at the book, to see whether he had got to a disagreeable bit, or was coming to one of her favourite passages; he felt the touch of the soft hand on his arm, and drew it within his own. "I don't read quite so fast as you, my dear, you see," he said. "Did you have a pleasant evening?"

"Yes, on the whole; Mrs. Ross was very kind and sang so beautifully, and the little Weatherheads are very bright nice children. You did not mind my staying, papa?"

"Not at all, I was only a little surprised at your messenger."

"Mr. Armstrong! yes, I was sorry, I did not in the least wish him to take my note, but he *would* do it," said Gyneth, apologetically.

The confusion of her manner struck Mrs. Deshon, and she looked up with the archness which even a headache could not subdue.

"We must not grudge him his little pleasures, poor fellow!" she said in her droll way.

"Miss Weatherhead said that her father was so sorry to lose Bertie," Gyneth observed, by way of changing the subject; "I like to think that he will be missed, don't you, mamma?"

"But I don't like to miss him," said the mother, with such a fond regretful look in her pretty eyes that her husband said in his most tender tone, "We shall have you counting the days to Christmas, Fanny, as I used to do when I was a schoolboy, but at least we have our little girl to prevent our feeling lonely."

"And Lawrence, papa," said Gyneth.

For a moment the Colonel's brow contracted, then the rare smile—which resembled Gyneth's in the change it produced in the whole countenance—shone forth, and he said pleasantly, "Yes, we mustn't leave our German student out of our account."

Lawrence did not deign even an answering smile, Gyneth nestled closer to her father with a shyly caressing gesture.

"Has Mr. Weatherhead found any one to replace Bertie at the night-school?" Colonel Deshon asked, shutting up his book as though inclined for conversation.

"Yes, no, at least Mr. Armstrong thinks of offering to teach there, but he has not said anything about it to Mr. Weatherhead yet."

"Is not this rather a sudden resolution? When does it date from?" inquired Mrs. Deshon, mischievously.

"From to-night, I believe; Miss Weatherhead was mentioning the want of teachers."

"And Mr. Armstrong's spontaneous benevolence induced him to offer his services on the spot? Very exemplary of him; wasn't it, Edgar?"

"Very much so," said the Colonel, in all seriousness, "and if he really takes up the work in earnest, Mr. Weatherhead may find him a valuable help, for he has plenty of money at his command as well as a good deal of time."

"Yes, and Mr. Weatherhead wants help so much," said Gyneth; "Augusta said that there are some districts vacant; she asked me if I would like to take one."

"And what reply did you make?"

"I said I was afraid I should not be fit, and that I did not think you would let me, papa, but would you? if so"—and she looked full of eager hope.

"No, no, you are too young, my darling, for such work in a place like this. I think parents in these days make a great mistake in allowing young people to take upon themselves responsibilities to which they are not equal, and which leave them no fresh youth, no happy time, in which they may be free and bright with no other care than to obey those set over them. It was not so in the primitive Church, the young then kept their place as learners, and were not thrust into difficult duties as they are now."

"Yes, I see," said Gyneth humbly. "Papa, I am afraid I have been presumptuous."

"No, no, my dear, I honour your motives ; you make me feel—as Lambert has often done—self-reproachful for the selfishness of my own youth, when I had scarcely an idea beyond amusing myself, or at the best improving myself, and took hardly any concern about the welfare of my fellow-creatures. If I refuse to let you join in district visiting and so on, it is not because I do not approve your desire to be useful ; cherish that desire, and in some years' time you may be all that you now dream of ; only, my little girl, be content with home-life, and the position of a child for a little longer, and do not be vexed with mamma and me if we try to keep you free from the premature knowledge of wickedness, and from cares too heavy for you."

"I never thought that I was fit," said Gyneth, "only the poorest help is acceptable when none other is forthcoming, and as Augusta said some of the districts were very good respectable ones I thought I might just mention—."

"Yes, I quite understand," interrupted her father, "but Miss Weatherhead must have used 'good' in a comparative sense, there is no part of this town in which you could visit from house to

house without seeing and hearing what it is better you should be guarded from. My dear child, trust me to judge what is best for you, let me keep you happy and innocent and care-free for a while at least."

"It shall be just as you please, papa," she said sweetly, but glancing at her face he saw something there which struck a doubt into his heart as to whether with all his love and care he could 'keep her happy.' Those soft stedfast eyes from which the tears were bravely kept back, that sweet-tempered mouth with its dutiful smile, that broad pale brow with its settled serenity, all spoke of a certain peace and calmness of spirit, but not of free childlike happiness. It was a child's face in its roundness of outline, and its innocent transparent expression, but that was all; a woman's sadness and a woman's patience under it, were written there plainly for such as had eyes to see.

Colonel Deshon felt it with a pang, as he bent down and kissed her, but he was too reserved himself to expect unreserve in his daughter, or to know how to invite it; nay, he did not even impart to "Fanny" his newly awakened anxiety about his "little girl."

Lawrence retired for the night at the same time as Gyneth, and stopped her at the door of her room to say, "What a particular old gentleman the Herr Papa is! we've had a fine commotion this evening,"—he was not English enough to say "row"—"he's been burning a German book of mine, and confiscating some French ones; I've read them all, that's one comfort."

"A very poor comfort, though, surely," said Gyneth, "I think it would be a great shame of any of us to be undutiful, Lawrie, papa is so very kind, so remarkably *untyrannical*."

"I am not so sure of that, he wishes to fetter

my intellect, to bind me down to conventional reading, and obsolete modes of thought: he will not find me so tractable as the good eldest brother, I have ideas of my own, I. We will talk more of this to-morrow; it is something that I have you to sympathise with me."

"I am not sure that I *can* sympathise always, but we won't quarrel, will we, Lawrie? we will help each other to be 'fromme Kinder,' and make the Herr Papa content with us."

He laughed, and shook his head, but bade her good-night very affectionately.

And it remained by her as a comforting thought throughout some sleepless hours that night that she might perhaps be useful to her brothers, and more especially help to make home pleasanter to Lawrence. She needed some comfort, for she had never had the "Lord Ronald" feeling more strong in her, never been more "weary o' this life" than she was just then. The future stretched itself before her so drearily; that forlorn humbled sense of being uncared for was so strong upon her: true, Mr. Armstrong loved her, she felt that beyond possibility of mistake, and for a few moments the temptation to encourage him for the mere sake of being loved was almost irresistibly strong, but then conscience spoke, "No, no, that would not be just or right, for I could not give him what he wants in return, he is very nice and pleasant, I like him very much, but I always feel as if he were younger than I. I cannot look up to him as I should need to do to a man whom I meant to marry, no, nor as I do to Lewis. I don't suppose I shall ever marry, why should I? Papa is very good to me, I shall be very happy at home in a little while, when I have got over this selfish longing to be *first* with some one. I must keep away from the Rosses, for Mr. Armstrong is so con-

stantly there, and it would not be right to seem to wish to encourage him ; I must be content with home-love and kindness, and try to rest more on that Higher Love which never fails. I am not to be allowed even to comfort myself by working hard for the poor, and I know I am not fit, papa's refusal is a sign that I am not ; I must do the little things that come in my way, and be more humble and patient." She pressed her face into the pillow, as if to hide away her tears even from herself, and as the long night wore on towards morning, the troubrous thoughts quieted themselves into prayers.

She did not ask for happiness, or for sensible comforts, outward consolations ; her petition was that uttered first some hundreds of years ago, but oftentimes echoed since by faithful Christian hearts, " Grant to me above all things that can be desired, to rest in Thee, and in Thee to have my heart at peace. Thou art the true peace of the heart, Thou its only rest ; out of Thee all things are hard and restless. In this very peace, that is in Thee, the one Chiefest Eternal good, I will sleep and rest. Amen." So slumbers came, soft, dreamless, unbroken, till the morning sunlight streamed in upon what seemed a child's face in its restful look.



CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Shall love for thee lay on my soul the sin
 Of casting from me God’s great gift of time ?
Shall I, these mists of memory locked within,
 Leave and forget life’s purposes sublime ?
* * * *

“ I will this dreary blank of absence make
 A noble task-time, and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to o’ertake
 More good than I have won, since yet I live.”

FRANCES BUTLER.



YNETH felt as if she were beginning life again, in a new spirit, and under new circumstances, when she awoke on the morning which succeeded Mrs. Ross’s tea-party. Lambert was gone; she could no longer look to him for that mute sympathy and approval on which she had unconsciously learned to depend; the Rosses were cut off from her by their connection with Mr. Armstrong; Lewis was on the point of starting for Brittany, and had not sent her even a line or a message of farewell; the Burnabys were already abroad, taking their usual autumn tour; Jeannie and her husband were in Italy, and did not hold out any hopes of returning to England until Christmas; even Anthony was away, on leave; and last, but not least, her father had forbidden her to seek any share in

parish work. So, all that she could attempt, and all that she could expect of interest, lay in her home : there, or not at all, must she seek to be useful ; within its sphere she must find contentment, or yield herself a prey to discontent for the next few months. It might be little that she could do there ; her duties might be so light, as to make it almost appear that she had none at all ; but in taking careful heed of these,—in fulfilling them exactly and conscientiously in a spirit of loving obedience,—lay her best hope of gaining strength and cheerfulness.

How weak she had been in grieving over the change in Lewis ! Was it not quite natural ? Had she not read, hundreds of times, how favourite sisters, favourite friends, are often overlooked, when men become engrossed in the interest of a new and deeper love ? And why had she not followed the example of these good sisters and friends, in at once overcoming her disappointment and jealousy, and contentedly taking the second place ? She had not complained, certainly, or been angry or unjust ; but she had nursed her wounded feelings in secret, and allowed herself to be discontented and weary of home employments. It was very despicable of her. She felt a kind of stern desire to punish herself for her weakness.

But, poor child ! she need not, to say the truth, have blamed herself quite so hardly ; for her position with Lewis had not been merely that of a sister, first for a while by reason of circumstances, and destined naturally to become second as years went on. Mr. Grantham had of deliberate choice made her first with him, shared with her his thoughts and schemes, as he did with no one else ; shown her the best, deepest part of his nature, as he did to no other, not even to the “dear granny ;” and therefore she might justly feel wounded when

she found herself, all at once, comparatively set aside.

But these feelings should be conquered, so she determined: she would not be any longer so faint-hearted, so unthankful, as to give way to dreariness, because all things were not as she would have them. Were not disappointments, hardnesses, perplexities, meant to be helps rather than hindrances? Would not there be strength given her to take up her little cross, if only she were willing, and did not perversely turn away from it?

Now, when human love was the least satisfying, when she had the least appetite for intellectual pleasures,—when the active works of charity to which she would have turned for solace were denied her, and it might have been thought that the weariness with which she had long struggled would fairly overpower her,—there came upon her a fresh spirit of hope, and trust, and energy, which made her rise up valiantly, content to live and labour on, “faithful over a few things.”

It is making too much of outward influences to ascribe every great change in the mind and purpose of a human being to some definite outward cause; and it was from the very absence of any exterior consolation, advice, or encouragement, that this change of feeling had taken place in Gyneth. In her loneliness, in her despondency, in her sore distrust of herself, she had fled for refuge to “the One Chiefest, Eternal Good,” and had found the help she sought. For it is in such lonely hours that the devout soul “learns to love and to be with Him, Whom ‘none loseth but who leaveth,’—that only ‘place of rest imperturbable, where love is not forsaken, if itself forsaketh not.’”

“Faithful over a few things,”—faithful over a few—those words seemed to ring in Gyneth’s ears, as she finished her morning prayers, and, opening

her window, let the cool bracing sea-breeze bring freshness to her cheek. Firmly, but in all humility, she resolved that they should be her watch-word through the day. She paused on her way down stairs to ask if Edgar were ready ; she was sure he must miss Lambert this first morning ; and with so sweet and blithe a smile was she talking to him, as they entered the breakfast-room together, that her father looked up at her with sudden relief, and the hope that his fancy of the preceding night might have been only a fancy.

"Mamma is not coming down to breakfast," he said. "Her headache kept her awake part of the night, and she is tired and sleepy this morning."

So Gyneth made the tea, and then ran up to the nursery to fetch Katie, who was probably waiting, in the expectation that her mamma would come to take her down as she usually did.

"You had better give Lawrence a call as you go by," said Colonel Deshon, as she left the room; and, accordingly, she tapped at her brother's door, with an intimation that it was breakfast-time.

He opened it, and showed himself fully apparelled, with the exception of his neck-tie, which he held in his hand.

"I can't get this wretched thing to accommodate itself to my will," he complained ; "I've been tying and untying it for the last quarter of an hour. Do see if you can arrange it for me."

She laughed, and taking it in her deft woman-fingers, gave it at once the graceful turn that the fastidious boy desired ; but she only allowed him one second to behold its effect in the glass, for her father must not be kept waiting, and, moreover, she had no desire to encourage dandyism. But Lawrence was gratified by the little service she had rendered him, and was extremely amiable all breakfast-time, inviting her to take a walk with

him that afternoon, and promising to bring her home a book she wanted from the library in the town. It was "Poems, by the author of 'John Halifax,'" and she had expressed a wish to see it some days before; but now, remembering her new-formed resolution not to indulge much in either novels or poetry, she felt inclined to say that she had rather he would not attempt to get it. But then she remembered that Lawrence himself might like to see it; that, in things innocent, "moderation, not total abstinence," is the wisest plan; and that she might keep a firm rule upon herself by restricting such reading to proper times, instead of giving it up altogether. So she thanked him for his kind intentions, and made no attempt to frustrate them.

After breakfast she went to her mother's room, received orders concerning the dinner, which she subsequently transmitted to the cook, and undertook the adding up of some accounts which might have brought back Mrs. Deshon's headache. This done, and a letter to her grandmother written, she began to consider what next to do; for she thought it best to forego her daily practice, lest it should disturb her mother. A volume of "Quits," in which she was much interested, lay temptingly near her; it would be so comfortable to sit in the low arm-chair, between the fire and the window, and give herself up to the full enjoyment of the clever picturesque descriptions of life in the Bavarian Highlands. But she remembered what Lewis had once said about light literature not being admissible till after two o'clock in the day, and turned steadily to the perusal of a "History of the Dutch Republic," which was rather dull reading, but might be supposed to be useful.

There was no possibility of continuing such grave studies after Lawrence returned from Har-

bourmouth. He would lean over her, criticise the book, hum snatches of French songs, and draw unnatural trees on the piece of paper she used as a mark, till at length this reminded her that she had once promised to show him the various "stitches" used in pencil drawing to represent the varied foliage of the different kinds of English trees; and, laying aside the Dutch Republic, she proposed to give him his first lesson there and then. A sheet of drawing-paper and some pencils were soon found; and while she elaborated specimens of oak, elm, birch, willow, &c., Lawrence drew in one corner a portrait of a linden-tree which grew near the window of the room which he had occupied at Bonn.

"Don't you think perfumes are much associated with thoughts?" he said, "I never remember those words of Schiller's about the way to the highest truth lying through the morning door of the beautiful, without seeming to feel the fragrance of my linden tree all around me. I used to sit with my window open that it might reach me as I read."

"Yes, I quite understand that," said Gyneth, thoughtfully, "I always associate some parts of 'the Christian Year' with the perfume of the lemon-verbena leaves which I used to dry between its pages, but I'm afraid I don't equally comprehend that idea about 'the morning door of the beautiful'; I can fancy a meaning for it, but I'm not sure it is the right one. I remember being puzzled when I met with it in the Life of Perthes."

"Was wir als Schönheit hier empfinden, wird einst als Wahrheit uns entgegen gehn," quoted Lawrence; "don't you feel that beauty is the highest truth?"

"I don't know; I think I feel more that truth is the highest beauty."

"Ah, it is all one," said Lawrence, "put it which

way you will ; in aspiring towards the beautiful we become beautiful, we also, that is true and complete as nature designed we should be."

"In aspiring towards the source of beauty, the Giver of truth, I suppose you mean," said Gyneth, thinking out his meaning for herself, "not beauty and truth in the abstract, for that would be to stop short at by-ends, we should never reach perfection so. And as it is the attractiveness of real goodness, 'the beauty of holiness,' as the Bible calls it, which makes us first love it and long to be good ourselves, you call the beautiful 'the morning door,' the way of entrance; yes, I see, I can feel the truth of that."

Lawrence drew a labyrinth of perplexed lines across the boughs of his linden tree. "You are not content without making it so personal, so practical," he said, "that is just like a woman: never able to reason in the abstract."

"Ah, but Lawrence, remember, it was just for the sake of the practical bearing on his own character that Perthes valued that saying of Schiller's; don't you recollect how in writing to his friend Runge of it, he says, 'O brother, let us become good, true men, and aspire evermore towards moral purity and beauty?' He did not only reason about the beautiful in the abstract."

"Well, at least you have read something, you are not utterly without comprehension," said Lawrence in a mollified tone, "and you do not dogmatize like the good Lambert, who will believe nothing unless 'the Church' has cut and dried it and bound it up safe in one of her creeds."

"Because all truth is embodied in them," said Gyneth, quickly, "and perhaps those feel the best the deep beauty of the Church's teaching who, like Bertie, do not talk about 'the beautiful' at all."

"*Mais !*" exclaimed Lawrence, with a gesture of

intense astonishment, "you do not mean to say you find beauty in the catechism, and all the good dry forms?"

"Yes, I do indeed; perhaps one does not see it at once, but it grows on one year by year; how beautiful it is to be part of one great body, united under one perfect Head, holding a common faith, bound together by mutual love, using the same sacred symbols, working for the same purpose, looking to the same blessed end,—oh, Lawrence, if one could only remember that, feel that always, life would be so beautiful that we should never feel weary or unthankful any more!"

Her enthusiasm touched him, though he but dimly comprehended it. "So 'the Church' means all that for you!" he said. "Go on; tell me more; I like to hear it."

"But, Lawrence, you know it already, what I am saying is nothing new, only if we could always keep it in mind! It gives one such a beautiful awed feeling when as one kneels in church one knows oneself to be brought near not only to CHRIST's people on earth, but to those gathered up in Paradise, when one remembers that

'The saints are there, the living dead,
The mourners glad and strong,
Their beams through every window shed,
Their voice in every song.'

But Lawrie, please, I can't talk of it any more." Her voice had dropped low, and her head was bent down and shadowed with its overhanging hair; she had struggled hard with her reserve to be able to say thus much.

But the effort had not been made in vain, weak as her words were they had opened a new 'door of the beautiful' to her brother, they had shown him dimly, but still with a sense of reality a glimpse of

a higher beauty than any that his metaphysical studies had taught him to aspire to.

"When we had our student festival last year," he said, "we drank toasts to all the great men of our own time, and then there was a great silence made and standing up quite solemnly, we drank to 'the immortal dead.' I felt as though they were near us then, and thought it very beautiful, but when I described it to the good elder brother the other day he first would say nothing, and then when I pressed him said, 'it might have been very well if we had been Pagans!' I confess it made me angry to hear him, but now I own, Gyneth, that your way of remembering the dead is more beautiful."

"But, Lawrence, it is not only my way, it is the Christian way, the way the Church teaches us; what I have said to you is what I have been taught, not anything that I have found out for myself."

"Ah, well, at least you can give one a reasonable account of what you have been taught, you do not take refuge in the dry 'yes,' or the dry 'no,' or the still dryer 'perhaps,' of our respected brother. The Herr papa deigns to enter into argument, but with him one must be so grave, so serious, it quite makes one yawn; he said he would show me some passage in some old book or other this morning; I hope he will put it off till after luncheon, I am so hungry!"

Gyneth's glance of surprise had a narrow escape of being contemptuous; but after all, Lawrence was only a boy. She said to herself that it would be unfair to expect from him the seriousness of an older person. He might theorise grandly about the morning door of the beautiful, but the material kept a stronger hold on him; whatever became of his argument, he could not forget that it was luncheon time.

She was half disposed to pity him, when just as the clock struck one, Colonel Deshon came in, and remarking "This clock is rather fast, we shall have time to look at that passage I mentioned to you before luncheon is ready," carried him off to the study, but she was pained at the careless disrespect of the manner in which he received the summons, making his reluctance as apparent as possible, and not even taking the trouble to suppress his yawns. However polite and agreeable Lawrence could be when he chose, he did not always treat his home-circle to a very large amount of courtesy, and whenever he was bored or wished to seem so, assumed such intense and marked indifference of look and tone as was a matter of astonishment to Gyneth, who had been taught to think her own natural languor of manner something to be struggled against rather than paraded after her brother's uncourteous fashion.

Her conversation with Lawrence had recalled thoughts of former discussions with Lewis, and now that she was alone, her pencil moved dreamily through the graceful bending lines of a willow-tree, which she was drawing for Lawrence's benefit, while her lips were parted in an unconscious smile, which now and then spread to her eyes as one pleasant recollection succeeded another. It was somewhat of a shock to be recalled from the past to the present by Fanny's discordant tones exclaiming,

"I say, Gyneth, how jolly it must be to sit here by yourself as you do, and not be mewed up with a commonplace old governess and that stupid child Edgar. Fancy, he didn't know the date of the battle of Hastings, and Miss Manson said I was just as ignorant because I didn't know what soap was made of: as if anybody could care about that! nasty stupid stuff!"

"Your hands would be the better for a more intimate acquaintance with that useful article, Fan," replied Gyneth with a fastidious glance at a somewhat inky forefinger.

"Well, I know; I'm going to wash them, but you might let me look at your drawing a minute; I never saw you draw before. What tree do you call that?" and the inky finger went down upon the centre of a charming little larch tree, which Gyneth considered her *chef-d'œuvre*, and which had reminded her most pleasantly of that spring-tide drive to Traversham, which she and her cousin had enjoyed together.

She pointed silently to the disfiguring smudge produced, with a momentary feeling of displeasure at the rude interruption of her agreeable retrospections, but did not utter the exclamation of annoyance which Fanny had perhaps expected. In another minute she roused herself to answer her sister's question, and even entered into a description of the beauty of the larch-trees in Traversham woods, when they put on their spring robes of tender green.

Fanny listened with interest, and finally treated her to an assurance that she was "a jolly old thing, and she wished all cross fussy people would take pattern by her, Miss Manson included;" whereat Gyneth shook her head, and laughingly answered that she should become "cross" if she heard the good governess so disrespectfully spoken of again.

And then, poor child, she sighed to herself over Fanny's faults, and wished that she knew how to help her to cure herself of them, not seeing, (as how should she?) the charm of her own gentleness, and the influence it was beginning to exert over her rude little sister. No grave rebuke from her father, no playfully satirical remark from her

mother, no quiet hint from Lambert had ever made Fan so inwardly ashamed of her rudeness as did the contrast between it and her sister's exceeding gentleness ; and if these secret feelings had not yet had much effect upon her outward conduct, they were not destined to be always thus fruitless.

Just as Gyneth put away her drawing, Colonel Deshon came out of the library, and paused on his way up stairs to look in on her and say rather despondingly, "Gyneth, I wish if you can you would persuade Lawrence into a better style of reading, I can see he takes my advice as mere preaching, the sort of thing that a father is bound to say, but a son not bound to attend to ; and he has dipped into German rationalism and French scepticism, without really caring much for either, I do think, until he doesn't know what he believes and what he does *not* believe. It is vain to force much serious reading on him, but if he would only read books in which good principles and sound doctrine are taught indirectly, it would be something gained."

"I will do anything I can, papa," said Gyneth timidly. "Lawrie does sometimes read books because he finds I am interested in them."

"And what kind of books are they chiefly?"

"I am afraid they *hate* been chiefly stories, papa, or poetry ; I—I have been rather idle lately."

"Well, I am not an advocate for idleness, nor very fond of story-books, as you know, my love ; but still they have their uses, and to find that Lawrence could be interested in a good English story of a high tone would be a real satisfaction to me."

"I think he does like them indeed, papa ; he is rather tired of horrors and mysteries, I fancy, and a fresh natural English story is quite a pleasant variety to him."

"Well, then, encourage him to read such by all means. I know I may trust *your* taste, my dear. And now come to luncheon, for mamma is already in the dining-room, and Lawrence professes to be very hungry."

Gyneth revolved in her mind plans for her brother's benefit as she sat at luncheon, hoping to prove worthy of the trust her father reposed in her, though a little doubtful of her powers of influencing any one. She remembered Lawrence's promise to walk with her that afternoon, and was considerably disappointed when she heard her mother observe that "as her head was better, she must really pay some visits, and that she should like Gyneth to accompany her."

"But Gyneth is going to take a walk with me, mamma," said Lawrence, and Gyneth looked up hopefully, trusting that the visits were not imperative, and that her father would sanction her keeping her engagement with her brother.

But no, he merely said, "You must put off your walk to another opportunity, since your mother wants Gyneth to-day," and evidently considered the objection disposed of. Thereupon Lawrence sulked, and declined the ride to which Colonel Deshon proceeded to invite him, and Gyneth felt that he would probably pass the afternoon in reading the trashiest novel he could find, and be impervious to any good influence for the remainder of the day. She was inclined to vex herself about this, and set off on her round of visits in the cold silent mood which was her nearest approach to ill-humour; she thought she could have been useful to Lawrence, and paying visits was no use at all! it was really very tiresome that she should be baulked in all her attempts at usefulness!

But then it came across her that this affair of the visit paying was just one of those "matters of

obedience," the discipline of which she had herself desired, it had been her ideal of duty for that afternoon to devote herself to Lawrence, but if a plainer duty came in the way her ideal must needs be sacrificed, and such little sacrifices were no doubt wholesome though not pleasant; it would be wrong to make herself responsible for what Lawrence might do in her absence, perhaps he might recover his good humour and ride with his father after all, at any rate she could not help him by giving way to vexation. So in these and other ashamed and penitent thoughts her fit of annoyance cleared off, and she responded pleasantly to her mother's attempts at conversation.

The first visit was to the Estcourts, and on coming out she had to bear some criticisms on her shy reserved manner, and some exhortations to exert herself more, cultivate small talk, and try to be more generally agreeable. The one thing that Mrs. Deshon was particular about in her children—next to their taking pains to please and satisfy their father—was that they should be agreeable in society, and Gyneth not unfrequently fell under censure for failure in this respect. She knew it to be deserved, and could only receive it humbly, and try to be more attentive and animated, bringing a higher motive to bear upon the effort than any that her mother suggested. She called Christian charity and the thought of church-membership to her aid when trying after the pleasant courteous feelings and manners which Mrs. Deshon recommended to her on lower grounds; she *could* not have roused herself to the effort by any meaner motive, it was not in her to care whether she were popular, and whether people considered her well-bred or not, she was a great deal more concerned to *be* than to seem.

When they returned home, Lawrence was out,

and the children invited their mother to a mysterious conference in the library, touching a present which they wished to make to nurse on her approaching birthday ; so Gyneth was once more left alone, and, sitting down by the drawing-room fire, gave herself up for a while to that dream of the past, which was so dangerously attractive in contrast with the small worries of the present time.

But she had not forgotten her good resolutions. These pleasant remembrances were very well in their way, but it would not do to indulge in them too much ; they made the dreary weight of absence and silence which had fallen between her cousin and herself more difficult to bear ; they helped to make her dissatisfied with home-life. So she recalled herself to outward things, trimmed up the flowers in the vase on the table, searched for and found a missing piece of music, which her father had expressed a wish to hear, and then took up the book which Lawrence had brought her from the library. She opened it at some stanzas which seemed as if meant specially for her :—

“ ‘ Two hands upon the breast,
And labour’s done ;
Two pale feet cross’d in rest,
The race is won ;
Two eyes with coin weights shut
And all tears cease ;
Two lips where grief is mute,
Anger at peace.’
So pray we oftentimes, mourning our lot :
God, in His kindness, answereth not.

“ ‘ Two hands to work address
Aye for His praise ;
Two feet that never rest
Walking His ways ;

Two eyes that look above
Through all their tears ;
Two lips still breathing love,
Not wrath, nor fears.'
So pray we afterwards, low on our knees,
Pardon those erring prayers, FATHER—hear these."

Yea, that was the true Christian spirit, to be ready to live and work on in ever so humble a way, striving to serve God faithfully and cheerfully, spite of sorrow of heart, and the discouragement of frequent failures. "Oh, be brave, be brave," something said to her; in part, perhaps, a whisper of that self-respect which forbade her to yield herself a victim to wounded affection, but springing, in the main, from a higher source, and bringing with it a better and more enduring courage. "Be brave!" Yea, she *was* brave, even then, and would be braver still: the maidens of this our day are not prone to give themselves up to despair, like the "fair Elaine" of olden time, though they may have hearts as innocent, and gentle, and loving as that of "the lily-maid of Astolat."





CHAPTER XIX.

“Strangers yet!
After childhood’s winning ways,
After care, and blame, and praise,
Counsel asked, and wisdom given,
After mutual prayers to heaven,
Child and parent * * *
* * * strangers yet.”

MONCKTON MILNES.



N autumn nosegay,—what a charming thing it is, though pale and scentless in comparison with the rich blossoms of summer! Gyneth, as she picked her way daintily across the damp lawn, and among the flower-beds saturated with the November rains, thought herself well repaid for her trouble, when, here and there, she lighted upon a stray china-rose, a cluster of white chrysanthemums, or a brilliant sprig of *pyrus japonica*; and so successful was she in her search, that, as she carried her spoils back to the house, she thought to herself there would be more than sufficient to replenish the vase in the drawing-room, and enough to enable her to compile a choice little bouquet, to offer to Miss Manson, the children’s governess.

The dusky little “furnished apartments,” in one of the most dismal parts of the town, in which

Miss Manson resided, were often brightened by a nosegay of Gyneth's gathering ; and some of Gyneth's favourite books, too, had found their way there, lent to beguile the tediousness of the young governess's lonely evenings.

Any one who had seen the gleam of pleasure which lighted up Miss Manson's face as Gyneth entered the library with her flowers that November morning, would have guessed that Miss Deshon, with her gentle grace and sweet, shy friendliness, was no unwelcome visitant, even though she did cause an interruption to the rehearsal of that particular column of the multiplication table which Miss Manson was most desirous of impressing upon Edgar's memory.

"Thank you, oh, thank you ! Are you sure I am not robbing you ? And, Miss Deshon, can you, now you are here, persuade Edgar to a little more attention ? I do not like making complaints, as you know ; but he has been so very inattentive for these last few days, that we have scarcely got on at all, and I am not happy about it."

The poor teacher looked seriously concerned, while the little pupil wore his most *unconcerned* and indifferent air.

"How is it, Eddie?" said Gyneth, pleasantly ; "has a little idle fit come on ? If so, I am sure you will make haste and shake it off, won't you?"

No answer was vouchsafed, and Fanny exclaimed,

"Oh, it's no use talking to him, Gyneth ; he's sulky. He used to be so sometimes in Corfu, and no one but Bertie can do anything with him till the fit's over."

"At least they can keep from making him worse," said Miss Manson, reprovingly. "I'm afraid it was your laughing at his mistakes that first helped to bring on this sullenness, Fanny ; you must try

to control yourself, my dear, and not make remarks that wound him."

"But he is not going to think about it any more," said Gyneth, kissing him. "Come and make friends with him, Fan, and then I daresay he will be able to bring the multiplication table to a happy conclusion."

Fanny, who was far from meaning to be unkind, came readily at her sister's call, and proffered the cordial hug, which was her warmest sign of amity; but Edgar shrank proudly away from her, and neither spoke nor smiled.

"Come, my dear, we must at least finish our morning's lessons," said Miss Manson, with a desponding gesture; "go back to your writing, Fanny. And now, Edgar, let us go on with our multiplication: twelve times five are—what?"

No reply.

"Don't you know it, Eddie?" asked Gyneth, gravely. Not a word. The little gentleman stood twisting his curls round his fingers with the most provoking unconcern.

Miss Manson closed the books, and put Edgar's slate on the mantel-piece. "He has not done a single sum to-day," she observed; "his lessons have been a mere farce for these several days." And she looked anxiously towards Gyneth, as if expecting some help from her.

It flashed across Gyneth's mind that, if she were to say that she must tell Bertie of this naughtiness when she next wrote, it would probably have more effect on Edgar than any other argument; but she could not think that such a threat would be a right mode of influence.

"Would you not like to speak to mamma, Miss Manson?" she said, hesitatingly. "I think she ought to be told that Edgar has been disobedient to you, and then she will judge what had better be

done with him. I know you do not like getting him into trouble, and neither do I; but mamma is so very kind."

Miss Manson looked a little discomposed, and Gyneth felt afraid that she had seemed interfering, but Fanny explained. "Why, Gyneth, Miss Manson spoke to mamma yesterday, and she said 'she was very sorry, some people hadn't the knack of managing children, she hadn't herself, but she had hoped that Miss Manson might, Edgar could leave off lessons for that morning, and she hoped he would be a better boy another day; it was very naughty of him to be so troublesome.'"

Miss Manson who had vainly interposed with 'hush,' in the middle of this speech of Fanny's, remarked gravely at the end, "My dear, you were not asked to repeat your mamma's remarks at all; and in such a disrespectful tone too. If you cannot be quiet and attend to your lessons I must ask you to go away." She spoke decidedly, and her face was a little flushed; Mrs. Deshon's reception of her complaint had not been so pleasant or judicious as to bear repetition in Fanny's pert tones.

Gyneth stood with drooped head, more pained than she could bear to show. She loved Edgar so dearly that it was grievous to her to see him indulging in a wrong temper, but she could have borne that better than this new proof of her mother's weakness. Yet there was a certain dignity in her quiet and rather sad tones, as she said, "If Edgar has not attended to mamma's wishes, I cannot suppose that he would to mine; papa will be the right person to appeal to if he continues troublesome to you, Miss Manson, but I hope he will not," and her voice softened into the most persuasive tenderness as she stooped down and looked into Edgar's sullen face, "You *will* be good, my darling, won't you? It grieves sister, and it

would grieve Bertie if he were here to see you so obstinate ; and Eddie, dearest," she whispered with still deeper earnestness, "you know Whom it grieves still more."

A slight thrill of alarm passed over Edgar's face as she spoke of appealing to his father, otherwise he was quite unmoved.

The chink of Colonel Deshon's spurs was heard in the hall, and in another minute he opened the library door.

"Well, how are the lessons getting on ?" he inquired ; "they are nearly over for to-day, I suppose. Thank you, Miss Manson, I am too muddy to come in ; oh ! is there anything the matter ?" as he observed the grave faces.

Miss Manson seemed nervous, and looked appealingly towards Gyneth, the terror which had seized on Edgar had partly affected her, and even Fanny was silent.

But Gyneth's face wore not a shadow of fear, only a little shame for Edgar's sake, as she said gently, "We are in a little trouble, papa, for Eddie has not been so attentive to Miss Manson as he ought for the last day or two. Perhaps if you would speak to him—"

"Indeed ! Come here, Edgar, what is the reason of this behaviour ?"

A shower of tears was the answer ; fright over-powered Edgar's obstinacy, he *would* not speak before, he really *could* not now.

In Lambert's childhood such a manifestation of fear would have made Colonel Deshon more stern, now it made him more gentle. He sat down on a chair near the door, and took Edgar on his knee. "Hush, hush, I must not have you so afraid of me ; let me hear what you have done wrong : even if I have to punish you, you can bear it like a man, can't you ? without all these tears. Now,

Miss Manson, tell me what you have to complain of?"

Miss Manson told the tale of Edgar's misdemeanours, softening it as much as she could, and Fanny scarcely waited for her to conclude before exclaiming, "It was my fault, papa, I laughed at Edgar for being stupid, and that offended him; we haven't either of us been going on well ever since Bertie went away."

"Indeed! why was not I told of it before? Ah," as he saw the frightened looks, "have I made all my children afraid of me?"

"Not me, papa," said Gyneth, pressing closer to him with a fearless confiding look which did his heart good, "only you know we children don't like to tell tales of one another, and Miss Manson's kindness made her unwilling to complain."

"I can quite understand that," he said, turning courteously towards the governess, "but I shall try to make your pupils understand that your authority must be respected, and for the future if they give you any trouble I must beg you to make a complaint at once to either myself or Mrs. Deshon."

"Thank you, I will do so certainly, if you wish it," she answered, still rather nervously, "I am afraid Edgar's refractoriness may be partly owing to my bad management; I have not had much experience."

Colonel Deshon cut short her honest apologies with a kind assurance that no excuse on her part was needed, and she went away somewhat relieved, though goodnaturedly concerned about what might happen to Edgar when she was gone. Colonel Deshon went to open the door for her, and then returned to the library, where his little son was anxiously awaiting his sentence. "You and I must have some talk by-and-by, Edgar," he said,

"but I shall leave you to yourself for a little while. Your dinner will be sent in here, and you must stay here till I give you leave to join your brothers and sisters again. Do you understand?"

Edgar understood so well that his terrified expression gave way to one of intense relief; he had expected something much more dreadful.

"What did you think I was going to do to you?" said Colonel Deshon, in astonishment.

Edgar coloured and trembled again, and the answer came in a burst of sobs, "Papa, you were cross to Bertie when he was a little boy!"

"He told you so, I suppose? I half suspected from whom you had learnt your fears," said the Colonel in a pained voice, "it is quite natural, poor fellow, I *was* too harsh to him."

"I am sure *he* never said so!" exclaimed Gyneith and Fanny in one breath.

"No, it was nurse that told me," said Edgar, "but I wouldn't believe her till I had asked Bertie if it was true, and he said, 'it was not crossness but severity,' so then I asked him whether he thought you would ever be severe to me, and he said he didn't know, but if you ever were, I might be quite certain it was because I deserved it."

"And you thought you had deserved it to-day?"

"I didn't know, but I—I was so frightened, papa."

"Well, never be frightened again, Edgar. I made a mistake—I own it to you freely—in training your brother Lambert after the rigorous fashion of my own young days, he was too gentle to be fit for such rough discipline, and I have been sorry for it ever since. At least I shall never make *that* mistake again, but remember, that if I am indulgent to you it is not because your faults do not grieve and displease me, or because I do not care about your being a good boy."

"No, I know," said Edgar, humbly. "I will do my sums now, papa."

"Yes, and learn your multiplication table as well, ready to say to Miss Manson to-morrow. Now girls, we must not keep mamma waiting luncheon any longer. I must just get rid of my muddy things, and then I will follow you to the dining room."

"Gyneth," said Fanny, when they had left the library, "I was so angry when you told papa of Edgar, but now I see that you were quite right, only you might as well have told of me too, for I deserved it just as much."

"You told of yourself, Fan, and I think when you are tempted to laugh at Eddie again you will remember that you brought him into disgrace to-day, and check yourself, for if to be punished oneself makes one remember a fault, I am sure to have brought punishment by it on another person, makes one remember it far more."

"I'm sure it is much harder to bear," said poor Fanny with a very rueful grimace, "but you don't think papa will keep Eddie in the library long, do you? How pleased he is with you, Gyneth; he looked at you, oh, such a way when you said 'not me.' I'm sure I don't know why I should be afraid of him, for he never was cross to me in my life, but somehow mamma and nurse have always made rather a bugbear of him, and Bertie, though he never did that, always seemed as if he expected him to be severe. And I know I have heard Anthony say that he is very strict in the regiment, more strict than cousin Anthony likes I suspect."

Edgar was not long kept in durance, his father took him out with him in the afternoon, and when they returned allowed him to join the family again as usual, but he was not the less conscious of having been 'very naughty,' and hung his curly head

all the day in mute shame and penitence. He did not, however, shrink away from his father any more, but kept close to him, and looked up with a bright gleam of acquiescence at the remark which followed his 'good-night.'—" You must try to get up in an industrious mood to-morrow, Edgar. I shall ask Miss Manson to keep a defaulter's book, like we have for the soldiers, and submit it to my inspection every now and then ; but I hope I shan't find many entries in it ; see if you can keep the pages blank."

And blank they were when the book was inspected at the close of the following week. A result which was equally satisfactory to father and governess.

Colonel Deshon had awaked to the perception that Edgar was getting too old to be left entirely to women's management, and, without attributing any neglect to his wife, determined to make it his own business to see that Edgar was diligent at his lessons, and amiable towards his sisters. He superintended every evening the learning of the tasks—well chosen and very easy ones—which were to be said to Miss Manson the next day, took his little son out with him when not bound on too long a walk, and kept up the Sunday repetition of catechism and hymns which Lambert had established. And Edgar certainly prospered under this new control : he had never been at home before without Lambert, and the loss of the influence which kept him from disagreements with Fanny and disobedience to his too-indulgent mother would have been very much felt if a new check had not been supplied by the very kind and careful surveillance which his father now kept over him. Gyneth rejoiced in this new state of affairs, though not at all conscious that she had herself brought it about by appealing to her father to conquer

Edgar's obstinacy, instead of hiding it away from him, as her mother would most probably have done. If Lawrence would only have responded to Colonel Deshon's influence as Edgar did, her mind would have been at ease about her brothers ; but, alas ! she could not but see that Lawrence resented his father's good counsel as "preaching," was as tacitly disrespectful to him as he dared to be, and disobeyed his injunctions without scruple when he could do so without risk of detention. She was distressed by the accidental discovery that the forbidden meerschaum was enjoyed stealthily now and then in the hay-loft, when Lawrence was supposed to have paid an innocent visit to the stable to inspect the condition of his favourite horse, and once she found her brother reading a book of Strauss's, which she knew her father had requested might be burnt. She could not bring herself to believe it to be her duty to report these misdemeanours to her father, more especially as Lawrence made a sort of half-promise that they should not be repeated : but she was unhappy about them, and was relieved when Anthony returned to Harbournouth, because rides and walks with him made a variety for Lawrence, and might prevent his seeking—at least so she trusted—less desirable amusements. She had not learned to like Anthony, but attributed to him the negative merit of being "very harmless," and thought he had too wholesome a fear of Colonel Deshon to be likely to encourage Lawrence in resisting his authority.

One day, as she was strolling along the beach with Edgar and Katie, who had run on a little in front of her, the quick tramp of a horse was heard in the loose shingly soil, and Mr. Armstrong rode up to her.

He began with an exclamation of pleasure at having met her, and she prepared to be coldly civil,

but his next words drove all thoughts of self out of her head. "I am so glad that I have met you alone, Miss Deshon, because I want to say a word or two about your brother, if you will not think it impertinent. Do you think the Colonel knows, or would approve if he did know, how much time he spends in our billiard and smoking rooms at the barracks, and how much he has been taken up by Morehurst and Villiers, and others of the fast set?"

"I—I didn't know he ever went to the barracks, except to meet my cousin Anthony," faltered Gy-neth in surprise; "he often rides and walks with him."

"Then you knew nothing about it, and I have startled you! I am so sorry, but I rushed straight into the subject because I so seldom have an opportunity of speaking to you alone. Your little brother is coming to join us now."

"I will tell him to run on again: I should not like him to hear a word against Lawrence;" and when she had despatched Edgar in search of some sea-weed she added, "Will you please tell me anything you think I *ought* to know?"

"There is not much to tell; and it distresses me to give you pain, only I'm afraid your brother makes those rides and walks with Waller a pretext for coming to the barracks, and if you could manage to cut off the excuse of these engagements it might prevent much mischief. He used to ride a good deal with the Colonel, and walk with you, when he first returned from Germany, did he not?"

"Yes, but I'm afraid he got tired of that. I suppose he wants amusement; he finds me dull, no doubt, and papa is so much older and graver, that he must miss his young student-companions. I suppose his liking to amuse himself with Captain Villiers and Mr. Morehurst cannot be wrong

in itself, only the doing it without papa's knowledge."

Mr. Armstrong looked doubtful and perplexed, and was silent for a minute; then he said hesitatingly, "I don't think Villiers and Morehurst are safe friends for him, though very likely they mean kindly; they never play without betting, for instance, and I know the Colonel does not approve of that."

"No indeed," said Gyneth in real alarm. "Oh, what shall I do!"

Mr. Armstrong looked at her as if he would fain have borne all the anxiety and trouble for her, and observed apologetically, "Perhaps I had better have held my tongue; if your brother gets into Woolwich Academy in January, that will take him away from all this, but I'm afraid he is getting into habits which may stick by him through life, and I have wished to act the part of a real friend—if you would let me—to you and all yours."

Her "thank you" could not be otherwise than grateful and cordial, though she had no heart to say more.

"If I had had any influence with your brother I would have remonstrated with him instead of troubling you," proceeded the young officer, "but he avoids me rather, looks down on me as '*a parvenu*,' I believe, which of course I am, as I never hesitate to avow."

"Which is exactly why I like you," thought Gyneth to herself, but she only said politely, "I am sure it is nothing to be ashamed of, and I hope you are mistaken in fancying that Lawrence looks down on you, I cannot think he would be so silly."

But she began to perceive with pain that she knew very little of Lawrence's real character, and though too innocent to feel the force of Mr. Arm-

strong's hints about "preventing mischief," was sure that her brother must be wrong in pursuing amusements which he found it necessary to conceal from his father, and was quite as anxious as Mr. Armstrong could wish to put a check on the frequency of those visits to the barracks which threw him into the way of temptation.

But how to set about it?

A temporary solution to her perplexity came from an unexpected quarter.

When she reached home that afternoon a letter from Lambert was put into her hand, which contained the following passage: "I have had a long letter from Lewis, giving an amusing account of his adventures in Brittany. The Burnabys, as I daresay you know, accompanied him part of the way, but the uncomfortable lodgings and primitive food did not suit Mr. Burnaby, so they are now *en route* for England, and are going to spend some time with a friend at Dover, which Lewis rather regrets on grandmamma's account, as he says she seems to miss them very much. He adds—and I think he meant me to repeat it to you—that he should be very glad to hear that you were going to stay a little while with grandmamma, for he fears she is out of spirits—a most unusual thing for her, is it not?—and thinks this a sign that she is not so well as usual. He hopes to be at home himself in another fortnight."

Mrs. Deshon held out her hand for the letter when Gyneth had read it. Bertie's epistles were considered *pro bono publico*, and never supposed to contain any secrets. She returned it with the smiling comment, "Very kind of Lewis to give us a hint that we are neglecting grandmamma! I will write and ask her to come to us at once, and we must try to cheer her; it is not our fault that she is not with us now."

"I have just heard from my mother, Fanny," said Colonel Deshon looking up; "you can see what she says, she promises to spend Christmas with us, but does not seem disposed to leave home at present. What does Lewis say about her?"

"He says she seems out of spirits, and hopes that Gyneth will go and stay with her. He has taken rather a round-about way of intimating his wishes to you, Gyneth."

"It would have been more like him to have written straight to me, certainly," thought Gyneth to herself, but she did not say so, and her face was unruffled by any shade of vexation.

"I will go and see my mother to-morrow, and take Lawrence with me," said Colonel Deshon; "we can quite well go and return in one day if it is not convenient to her to house us for the night."

"And will you take me, and let me stay a few days with grandmamma, papa?" said Gyneth. She did not like to ask for a longer time, fearing that Lawrence might make her absence an excuse for seeking the company of his friends at the barracks.

"One would have thought grandmamma would not have hesitated to ask you if she had really wanted you," objected Mrs. Deshon.

"There is no doubt, my dear, I fancy, of her being glad to have Gyneth at any time," said the Colonel. "I felt almost selfish in depriving her of her companion. And it is very natural that Gyneth should wish to go to her now."

"Especially as Lewis Grantham desires it."

Playful as was the tone, it made Colonel Deshon turn round and look at his wife with a sort of quiet wonder, not unmixed with a little very gentle reproach, which silenced her in an instant.

"I don't think Lewis would have suggested it unless he had thought that grandmamma really

wished for me," said Gyneth, in the calm voice that *would* not be ashamed or confused, let her mother hint what she liked; "and if you will be so kind as to spare me, mamma, I shall like to stay a few days with her very much."

So it was settled, and Colonel Deshon put off his expedition one more day, that Gyneth might write and ask if her visit would be convenient to her grandmother just then. An answer came by return of post, tenderly welcoming her, and inviting both her and Lawrence to extend their stay to a fortnight at the least.

"Before the expiration of which Lewis Grantham will have returned!" was Mrs. Deshon's mental reflection, but she had forbearance enough not to express it, or her own vexation thereat, when she found that both her son and daughter looked forward with pleasure to this extended visit.

Lawrence seemed more pleased than Gyneth had expected, and she accepted it gladly as a proof of his affectionate heart. Mr. Armstrong's revelations did not weigh so heavily on her as might have been supposed; the "charity"—in its deep sense of *love*—"which hopeth all things," made her trust that Lawrence when withdrawn for a while from the temptations of bad companionship, would begin to feel how wrong he had been in yielding to them; and in the quiet cathedral city better influences would surround him, the very sight of the grand old minster, the very hearing of the glorious chants that echoed there, might open to him that new 'door of the beautiful' to which she had striven to point the way.



CHAPTER XX.

"Our dear LORD is Himself all that our highest and holiest affections can seek or comprehend, for He made these our hearts : He gave us these our affections ; and through them the spirit speaks. Aspiring to their Source they rise up like the white smoke and bright flame, while on earth if left unmastered, they burn, suffocate, and destroy. Yet they have their natural and innocent outlets even here, and a woman may warm herself by them without scorching, and yet be neither a wife nor a nun."

Ye Household of Sir Thomas More.

LEWIS had not been mistaken when he surmised from her letters that "granny" was not quite in her usual health and spirits. Gyneth found her looking paler than was her wont, and evidently less able to employ herself actively, though making no complaint; and Anne recorded in strict confidence her belief that "Missus didn't sleep as well o' nights now as she used, for she always seemed feeble and tired-like in the mornings instead of waking up rested."

But in the pleasant society of her children, she rallied mentally if not physically; and to do Lawrence justice his efforts certainly contributed much to cheer her, though, of course, he could not be to her what his sister was. When in his grandmo-

ther's presence he was always amiable and polite, and sometimes very lively, though when alone with Gyneth, he often fell into a fit of sullen gloom which made her feel that his mind was not at ease and that his gaiety was only on the surface.

She concluded that it was the tacit deceit he had practised on his father, which weighed upon his conscience, and bethought herself how she could best lead him to make confession of his fault; she knew he had cause to dread Colonel Deshon's just displeasure, but surely that would be far easier to bear than his present uneasiness. One day when they had been to the Cathedral together, and Lawrence had seemed much impressed by the beauty of the service, not caring to conceal his feelings as an English-bred boy would probably have done; he broke off a discussion on religious art, upon which they had entered during their walk home, by the totally irrelevant remark, "I wonder whether grandmamma will give me any money when I am going away; she's very liberal to you, isn't she, Gyneth?"

"Only too generous, but Lawrie, I didn't think —" and there she stopped, her surprised look in part supplying the hiatus.

"You didn't think I was so mercenary? and now perhaps you will go to the other extreme, and suppose that while doing the agreeable to grandmamma I have been thinking of '*les beaux yeux de sa cassette*': but the truth is I want some money terribly just now, I don't know what I shall do if I can't get it."

His dark eyes had a brooding desperate look, which suggested very tragical intentions, but fortunately Gyneth was not the least alarmed by it. "If I knew what you wanted the money for, perhaps I could help you, Lawrie," she said in kindly hopeful tones.

"If I were sure you would not betray me," hesitated Lawrence; "will you promise to help me, without telling any one, liebes schwesterchen?"

"I cannot promise that," said Gyneth, "but if you will trust me, I will do my best to help you; only,—wouldn't it be better to tell all your troubles to papa?"

"Thank you," said Lawrence loftily, "How cold the wind is! What is that building at the top of the street?"

Gyneth looked at him in astonishment; but was too shy to press for his confidence, now that he seemed inclined to withhold it; perhaps she had not been sympathising enough, not seemed as if she really wished to help him, she would try to manage better another time, though she could not waver in what seemed right, even for his sake.

After a few indifferent remarks, uttered apparently from a wish to appear dignified and unconcerned, Lawrence turned off in the direction of the library, and left her to pursue the rest of the way by herself.

Just as she entered the quiet street in which her grandmother's house stood, she met Mr. Willis, and rather to her surprise he stopped and turned back with her, inquiring with much interest after Mrs. Deshon's health.

"It is unfortunate that Mr. Grantham and Ro—Miss Burnaby, I mean, should have been both away together," he observed, "but now that you are come, I daresay Mrs. Deshon wants no one else."

"I think she will be very glad when Rose and my cousin come back though," said Gyneth, "and she is hoping to see Mr. Burnaby looking the better for his tour."

"Yes,—he has been very well since he went to Dover, I believe, but that expedition into Brittany

was almost too much for him. You heard of that, I suppose, Miss Deshon?"

"Yes, through my cousin. I have not heard from Miss Burnaby since before she left England, she has not been so good a correspondent as usual lately."

Mr. Willis smiled, perhaps like many men he connected ideas of elaborately crossed sheets, and hosts of adjectives underlined, with the notion of young ladies' correspondence.

They had reached Mrs. Deshon's house, and politeness obliged Gyneth to ask him to come in, though she was not altogether glad when he accepted the invitation. Her grandmamma did not at once make her appearance, and Mr. Willis stood at the window looking dreamily out at the Convent garden, as if he had nothing in the world to say to her, but presently roused himself to inquire after her father and mother, and then observed suddenly, "You have known Miss Burnaby from her childhood, have you not?"

"Yes, we have been friends for the last seven years, and grandmamma used to tell me of her even before that, so it almost seems as if I had known her all her life."

"Do you think her changeable?"

"No, not at all." The answer came a little indignantly, both resenting his asking her such a question, and his venturing to ascribe such a failing to her friend.

He looked relieved and said very kindly, "Ah, you are too true a friend even to suspect such a thing, and I would not have asked the question if I had not known that no suggestion of mine could prejudice you against Miss Burnaby. Your cousin has a very high opinion of her too."

"Yes," acquiesced Gyneth quietly, "every one must have who knows her."

"And *he* knows her well; they are far more than common acquaintances, I mean."

"Yes," again, and no change in the proud, quiet face, though the girl's eyes were watching the sunlight playing on that bank in the Convent garden, where Lewis had found her on that spring morning, when he had so eagerly planned with her the expedition to Traversham, and "Miss Burnaby" had only been thought of as the convenient possessor of a pony-carriage.

Mr. Willis sighed, and continued, "He is just the person to draw her out, he knows so well the sort of talk that young ladies like."

Gyneth's lip curled slightly, she especially detested hearing young ladies spoken of as a distinct race, who could not be talked to like other people, but respect for Mr. Willis as being older than herself, and a clergyman, made her refrain from a satirical reply.

Mrs. Deshon came in, and the conversation still turned upon Mr. Grantham, and still his intimacy with Rose was assumed to be very great. Gyneth wondered why the subject should have so much interest for Mr. Willis, but would not spare herself the pain of hearing it discussed by attempting to turn the conversation into other channels; it must be a bad feeling that made it painful to her, she thought, and that feeling should be crushed, the sooner the better.

But when Mr. Willis was gone, and she could draw her own favourite low chair to her grandmother's side, and rest there quietly with that dear hand locked in hers, she knew, by the relief that repose and silence were to her, how great the previous effort had been.

She remained in that peaceful attitude for some time, then roused herself to say playfully, "A penny for your thoughts, dear grandmamma!"

"They are scarcely worth that, dearest child ; I was only thinking how much of human love is granted to some persons, and how completely it is withheld from others."

"I like to think that you have had a large share, dear granny, no one who has known you has been able to help loving you."

"They have all been too good to me!" said the old lady, a grateful suffusion springing to her sweet blue eyes as she spoke, "but I was thinking of Mr. Willis, it seems as if all his life he had had no one to love him or care for his interests, though he has spent himself for others."

"But, grandmamma, he has a mother, and a brother too, though certainly not a very agreeable brother, at least we none of us like Major Willis."

"Ah, Major Willis is a better brother than you might suppose, now, but when he was younger he was very extravagant, and Mr. Willis nearly beggared himself in paying his debts. And the mother, Lewis says I get quite cross whenever I talk of her, so perhaps it is better for me not to speak of her even to you, my darling; I have no patience with such mothers, I confess."

"Granny, you are never cross, that is Lewis's nonsense. But I thought Rose liked Mrs. Willis."

"So she did, and no doubt she is a very clever, stylish lady, and was very kind and attentive to our little Rose, but she lives gaily on money that her son can ill spare—Lewis met her abroad, he knows all about her, and—but, my dear, this is evil-speaking, I am getting quite a cross uncharitable old woman!"

"No, no, indeed, granny; it is only your pity for poor Mr. Willis that has made you a little wee bit fierce at the idea of his mother's not being

mother-like to him ; but surely he has *some* friends, the Burnabys are kind to him, are they not?"

"Yes, Mr. Burnaby knew his father, and was friendly towards him at first for his father's sake, and now for his own ; it is through the Burnabys that I have heard so much about him. Rose often talks of him, but I can never quite make out whether she really likes him or not ; poor man ! one cannot help seeing that it is more than *liking* on his side."

Gyneth gave a sudden start ; that this quaint, grave, old-fashioned-looking minor canon was an anxious jealous lover, painfully concerned in the caprices of the little Rose, and uneasy at her seeming preference of his friend Mr. Grantham, was an idea that had never crossed her imagination. There followed an instantaneous gleam of something like hope.

"Grandmamma, what is Mr. Willis's Christian name ?"

The voice was eager enough to surprise Mrs. Deshon, and she answered quickly, "Samuel, I know, because Rosie is naughty enough to laugh at his being named so."

The transitory hope died away in silence ; by no stretch of imagination could "L" be supposed to be the initial letter of either Samuel, or Willis, the mystery of that little locket with the "L" on it, about which Rose had been so unusually reserved, could not be thus satisfactorily explained.

It seemed as certain now that L stood for Lewis, as A for the inevitable "apple-pie," which B bit, and C cut, in little Katie's picture-alphabet.

"Poor Mr. Willis!" said Gyneth, "it does seem as you say, grandmamma, as if human love were to be withheld from him, but ought one to pity such people? don't you remember what Lamartine says when he has been describing how God gives

great station and influence to some men, and household loves and family interests to others,

*'Mais il a dit aux coeurs de soupirs et de foi,
Ne prenez rien ici, vous aurez tout en moi ?'*

"Yea," said the good old lady gently ; "you are right, dear child, the lot of those lonely ones may be the highest after all ; but I who have had so much human love to give thanks for all my life, cannot but wish that all those whom I am interested in should share in the blessing. I am foolish enough to grieve sometimes that Lewis has no home-people, no mother and sisters to care for him, and be proud of him."

"He has you, granny."

"Yes, dear boy ! he has the old granny such as she is, to take pride in his successes, and coddle him in her troublesome old fashion, but that is not much for him, and—it may not last long."

"Grandmamma!" The deep, deep pain and dread in that low stifled cry, told almost as much as the clinging sorrowful tenderness of the girl's embrace.

"Hush, my darling," said the old lady, soothingly, "you will try, I know, for my sake, to face calmly the thought of what must come some day—the parting that is only for a little while. But I did not mean to frighten you, there is nothing in the world the matter with me except the growing feebleness that such an old woman as I am must expect to feel. And it is foolish of me to be anxious about Lewis, if happiness is good for him it will be sent, and he has a brave cheerful spirit which will know how to bear loneliness if that is sent instead. Only I did hope—but never mind, it is natural that the young should prefer the young."

What could Rose be about ? for to her Gyneth

concluded Mrs. Deshon must be alluding—was Mr. Grantham to be disappointed as well as Mr. Willis? and what young suitor could it be whom Rose was supposed to prefer to them? Surely too this supposition must be a mistake, who could be preferred to Lewis?

Gyneth looked up in perplexity, and met a half-regretful, half-inquiring, almost pleading gaze from her grandmother.

"Dear granny," she said, "I hope Lewis will always let me be his friend, and though that is not much, yet if he were in any trouble it might be a *little* comfort to him to think that there was some one who felt with him and for him, as both Lambert and I do."

"Yes, that was what Lewis said, he said he was sure you would always be *friends*."

There was a slight shade of reproach in the soft tones which Gyneth felt without understanding, but this impression soon passed away, and she was brighter all that evening for the thought "So Lewis still reckons on my friendship and cares for it! Then I need not distress myself about his not having written or sent me any message; he is not really vexed with his little philosopher."

It is perhaps more usual to represent those to whom friendship is offered in lieu of love as rejecting it with the utmost scorn, such scorn being apparently considered justifiable, and almost commendable! but whether praiseworthy or not, Gyneth Deshon felt none of it, her head rose high with innocent happy pride at the thought of being always allowed to be the *friend* of one from whom remembering all that had passed between them, a more conventional heroine might have demanded "love or nothing!" Not that Lewis had ever "made love to her," as the saying is, much less bound himself to her by any promise, but the deep

affection, the exclusive preference he had shown her might well have been considered by any more precocious and less innocent maiden as indicative of a feeling far more than "brotherly" in its fervour.

To Gyneth it was enough to call that feeling friendship, remembering Jeremy Taylor's definition of that word as "the greatest love and the greatest usefulness, and the most open communication, and the noblest suffering, and the most exemplar faithfulness, and the severest truth, and the heartiest counsel and the greatest union of minds of which brave men and women are capable."

Yes, good Bishop, "the greatest love" you have said, and so it may be, though not of that kind which makes young maidens blush and dream of marriage. Gyneth Deshon as she called to mind your grand old words had no need to droop her serene eyes; that "most exemplar faithfulness" which she inwardly vowed to her cousin was nothing which she need be ashamed to adhere to, even if he became the husband of the little Rose. For a while her mother's playful, mischievous hints had had power to trouble her, but they should do so no longer. Lewis and she were friends, would always be friends; why should any one seek to suppose they might have been more to each other, when that meant so much?

It was well that she had come to such a satisfactory frame of mind with regard to Mr. Grantham, for the Saturday before she returned to Harbournouth he arrived at Mrs. Deshon's as usual, and in another mood there might have been pain to her in seeing how, while outward circumstances remained as of old, her relations with him had undergone an indescribable change. He did not horrify her by making a raid into the kitchen, nor banter her on her philosophical tastes, nor try

to pique her into irritation by a parade of good-humoured lazy indifference on the subjects in which she was most interested ; he was very attentive, very courteous, somewhat cold, extremely—she thought, *sarcastically*—tolerant of whatever opinions she expressed. Never mind, it would not have been exemplary faithfulness which could not believe in the truth of his regard for her, spite of a little change of manner. Perhaps Rose had shown some seeming preference for the younger suitor whose existence Mrs. Deshon had hinted at, and the secret anxiety about this made him constrained ; no doubt it would all come right in the end, for Gyneth believed in Rose's truth and nobleness almost as much as in her cousin's, and meantime there could be nothing very serious the matter, for every now and then Lewis broke into flashes of his old gay drollery, and even when grave, seemed by no means melancholy or miserable.

When he went away to smoke his usual evening cigar what could make Mrs. Deshon gaze after him with such tender solicitude, and say so pityingly, "Poor Lewis!"

Liberty to smoke unreproved made Mr. Grantham seem in Lawrence's eyes far more enviable than pitiable, and the speed with which the boy followed his cousin from the drawing-room was soon accounted for when Mrs. Deshon happening to go to the window with the intention of drawing the curtain closer, saw *two* red sparks travelling up and down the dark courtyard.

"My dear, your brother is smoking!" she exclaimed, turning back in alarm to Gyneth, "I thought I had been told your father had forbidden him."

"Yes," said Gyneth, "so he has, but I'm afraid Lawrie forgets now and then, or—"

"But, my love, hadn't you better remind him? I shouldn't like papa to think that I allowed his orders to be disobeyed here, though if it were not for the disobedience I shouldn't wish to interfere with the poor boy's pleasure. If there can be pleasure in anything so nasty!" and the old lady made a face such as most old ladies make when the odour of cigar-smoke is in the air.

Gyneth smiled, and rose reluctantly to obey her grandmother's behest, she was quite as sorry as Mrs. Deshon could be that her brother should forget or defy her father's commands, but any interference on her part had been lately so much resented that she feared it did more harm than good. Her steps were quickened by a remark from Mrs. Deshon that it was "almost too cold for her to go to the open door, and that perhaps she had better ring for Anne and send Lawrence a message;" such a proceeding would have been regarded by that proud young gentleman as little short of an insult, so wrapping a cloak round her for her grandmamma's satisfaction, she ran down to the door which opened on the court, and catching hold of Lawrence's arm as he passed, said, interestingly, "Lawrie, please come in, don't you remember?"

She did not say what, but Lawrence knew well enough, and threw down his cigar with a French execration which procured for him an admonitory, "I say, my boy!" from his fellow-smoker. Then quite irritated out of his usual politeness he pushed past Gyneth angrily and ran up stairs, muttering something about feminine spies, and "idiotic absurdity."

"Young bear!" commented Mr. Grantham, indignantly, "I had no idea he could be so uncourteous, and to you too! but what was the matter? did I commit an indiscretion in making him free of the contents of my cigar-case? He is certainly

very young to be a smoker, but he told me he 'had been one for years!'"

"I believe he got the habit of it in Germany, and when he first came home he used to smoke a great deal, but papa thought it bad for him and begged him to leave it off. I daresay it is unpleasant for him to be reminded of that by me, so no wonder he was vexed just now, but indeed I am sure he did not mean to be rude to me."

"Was so, without meaning it then," said Mr. Grantham, smiling, "he seems a little out of sorts altogether this evening."

"Yes, I am afraid he is not quite happy," said Gyneth, slowly, "and I cannot help him properly. I wish I might ask your advice about it, Cousin Lewis, but I am not sure that it would be right to talk of his affairs to you without his leave, for he will not even speak of them to me."

"But you know what it is that is troubling him?"

"Yes partly, at least I can guess from something that a friend—that Mr. Armstrong told me."

The lawyer's keen eyes lost that look of protecting sympathy that had so pleasantly softened them during the preceding colloquy. "Oh, so Mr. Armstrong is 'a friend' now, is he?" he observed in his driest tone, buttoning up his coat and moving towards the door as he spoke, as if bent on finishing his cigar.

"I did not mean to imply that exactly," said Gyneth, puzzled by the change of expression which the light of the passage lamp, shining directly on her cousin's face, revealed to her; "at first I meant to mention no name, but then I did after all, because I hate mysteries."

"Yet you make a mystery to *me* of what it seems you can talk over freely with this Mr. Armstrong?"

"Because it was he who told me about it," said Gyneth, with simple straightforwardness; unfortunately her colour *would* deepen as she added with some spirit, "I am sure he is not a person who would make mischief, it was from a really kind motive that he told me what he did."

"No doubt!" acquiesced Mr. Grantham, sarcastically, "shall I hang up that cloak for you?" as he saw her reaching towards the peg on which it usually hung, "Let me shut the door again till you are safe up stairs, this wind is too cold for you."

She shivered slightly, not from the coldness of the *wind* though, and with a quiet "Thank you" went her way up stairs.

But on the first landing her cousin caught up with her.

"Gyneth, I used to deliver to you preachments on injustice, and now I have illustrated them by being most abominably unjust myself! I cannot set up for a preacher any more, henceforth I must be considered as 'the wretched example,'—you know the story of the two American brothers?—but allow me at least to beg pardon, and assure you that whatever I may have said, I do really believe in the merits of your Mr. Armstrong."

"But you must beg pardon of justice, not of me," said Gyneth, with a startled look and smile.

"Why not of you?"

"Because you are so much older than I, that it doesn't seem right for you to apologise to me even in play; I ought rather to apologise to you, Cousin Lewis, for having hindered you from smoking all this time."

"Your apology is graciously accepted, *Cousin* Gyneth; good-night, don't let granny sit up for me, but I shall be glad if she will kindly have the fire kept in for me, as the infirmities of my ad-

vancing years make me more dependent on creature-comforts than I used to be."

The words implied some amount of pique, but it was the old merry, good-humoured tone, and the brown eyes dancing with mischief were quite youthful in their saucy brightness. Yet when he was alone again Mr. Grantham's mental reflection was this, "Six-and-thirty ! Of course *she* thinks that old, and so it is when compared with her age. Poor little girl ! she must needs be respectful, forsooth, when she remembers my mature years, exactly twice her own. Yet this used not to be thought of between us ; she is certainly changed!" And musing thus he made himself very unhappy, as is the fashion of even otherwise sensible people, when misled by Imagination, that "fool of the house," as S. Theresa called it.





CHAPTER XXI.

“Wenn auch Deine Hand mich drückt,
Wie sie pflegt in schönen Zeiten,
Werd’ ich’s nicht wie Liebe deuten
Wenn auch Deine Hand mich drückt!”

DIS F the little misunderstanding of the previous evening had left any bitterness behind it, none at least could be traced in either Mr. Grantham’s or Gyneth’s manner to each other when they met at the breakfast-table on Sunday morning. Mr. Grantham had what Gyneth when a little child had been wont to call “his Sunday face” on, not a prim, puritanical, extra-solemn expression, such as some may be inclined to associate with that description, but a calm bright peaceful look, as if he had laid all week-day cares and worries aside, and really meant to make the Sunday “a delight.”

They all went to the cathedral in the morning, and Gyneth, who had walked on rather quickly with Lawrence, stopped at the cathedral door, and turned round to enjoy one of her old pleasures, the watching her grandmamma approaching up the avenue, leaning on Lewis’s arm. Could there be anywhere seen a more charming picture of an old lady than Mrs. Deshon made that day? though

the slight form was not so erect as it had been used to be, nor the delicately-complexioned face so brightly tinted. She seemed to droop a little, and to need the support of Mr. Grantham's arm, which formerly had only been accepted as a matter of courtesy, and it was pleasant to see how carefully he accommodated his pace to hers, and how skilfully he kept up the little gentle flow of conversation which beguiled the way for her, without tiring her, as anything like discussion might have done. Looking at him then—his head a little bent to catch his companion's low-toned words, his bright impatient eyes softened into sweetness—Gyneth involuntarily recalled S. Chrysostom's words, "It betokens great strength, this gentleness: it needs a generous and a gallant soul, and one of exceeding loftiness, this gentleness."

Mrs. Deshon was too tired to be able to attend a second service that day, so Mr. Grantham engaged himself to Lawrence for a walk over the downs that afternoon, and Gyneth agreed to stay at home with her grandmamma, instead of going again to the cathedral, and then to go with her cousin and brother to the evening service at one of the city churches at which they had been told Mr. Willis was to preach.

But when after the early tea was over, and she had donned bonnet and shawl, Gyneth tapped at Lawrence's door to ask if he were ready, she received the unexpected answer, "No; I am not going, one dull sermon in a day is enough for any body."

"But the prayers," suggested Gyneth, "you won't like to miss them, Lawrie? do please, make haste and get ready."

"No, I have made up my mind to stay at home, I have something particular to do this evening. You had better not waste any more time on re-

monstrances, or you will be late; I know Lewis is waiting."

Yes, Lewis was waiting in the hall, humming to himself the air of "Jerusalem the golden," so Gyneth went down and joined him, observing apologetically, "We must go without Lawrence, please, Cousin Lewis, he has changed his mind, and does not wish to come."

Mr. Grantham received the intimation with great philosophy, remarking as they went along, "We have had a good deal of talk this afternoon, and I don't think those troubles that you spoke of are very serious, but what an absurd boy it is! so utterly unlike the youthful John Bulls that one is accustomed to. He was disposed to complain a good deal of the 'Herr Papa's' strict notions, and even began to quote 'Don Carlos' on the subject, but I couldn't stand that; fancy evening—as an Irishman would say—your father to that harsh bigoted old wretch Philip II.!"

"Lawrence's German and French quotations are apt to be rather exaggerated," said Gyneth, "but you really think there is not much amiss with him? Oh, I am so glad!"

"That is my impression; it seems he owes a small sum to one of his fellow-students at Bonn, who appears to have led him into this debt rather unfairly, and another young German who is now in London is going to Bonn shortly, and would take charge of the money if it were forthcoming, but—and now comes the worst part of the business—Lawrence was foolish enough to squander some of the money which he had been saving since his return home to pay off this debt, in bets with a young fellow of the name of Morehurst, because he must needs follow the example of this Morehurst's brother (whom I suppose you know, as he is an officer in your father's regiment) who betted

with Captain Villiers and others of the billiard-players."

"It sounds quite dreadful enough," said Gyneth, disappointedly.

"To you, my innocent little philosopher, and I would not have told it you this Sunday evening if I had been likely to have any other opportunity, but you must not take too desponding a view of Lawrence's errors, they are more the result of boyish vanity than anything else, I do believe. It seems the officers would not bet with him because he was only a boy, so in order to assert his manly dignity, he took to betting and also to playing cards for money with this young Morehurst, who, like himself, is a mere youth. Now he is in great misery and perplexity as to how he is to pay off this German debt, and I have not attempted to console him, for the more miserable he is the better, it will be a lesson which he will not soon forget. I have advised him to tell all to his father, ask his help, and then start clear for the future, but whether he will take my advice or not, I cannot say. You have not asked me what induced him to admit me into his confidence?"

"No, it seems natural that you should be trusted," said Gyneth simply.

"But I don't suppose I should have been, if Master Lawrence had not needed my help in finding out this Heinrich Müller, the young German, who is to take charge of the money, and whose London address your brother does not know correctly. He seems to be a good honest sort of young fellow, very different to the student to whom the money is owed, so I have some idea of asking Lawrence up to town for a day or two, and letting him manage his negotiations with this Müller himself, if your father has no objection. I want to introduce Lawrence to a King's College boy whom I

know, young Boyd, a brother of that Miss Boyd whom you have at Harbournouth, he is going to spend his Christmas holidays with her, so Lawrence will have an opportunity of improving the acquaintance, and I think it would be a capital thing for him, for Alexander Boyd is as fine a young fellow as I ever saw, steady and high-principled, and yet full of talent and fun."

"Oh! and Lawrence so wants a companion of that sort," exclaimed Gyneth; "thank you so much for thinking of it, Cousin Lewis."

"I mean to do more than think of it, if you approve: the only doubt is whether it is wise to interrupt Lawrence's studies any more, he ought to set steadily to work when he leaves here if he means to pass that examination in January."

"Yes; but I think he will work much better when this business is quite off his mind. It must be so dreadful to feel himself in debt."

"In the fact that it *is* 'dreadful' to him lies my best hope of him," said Mr. Grantham gravely; "I trust it may never be less so. The terrible part of the first wrong step is that it makes the second so much easier and less painful. But we must trust that with your brother the first will be the last also."

"And we can pray for him though he will not come to pray for himself," said Gyneth, in a low voice, as they entered the churchyard gate.

"Yes, and do not grieve too much over that refusal; confession to the earthly father may perhaps be accepted by the heavenly as a greater sign of penitence than even prayers could be; if Lawrence is writing to your papa to-night, as I think and hope he is, you will see that it will be the beginning of a great improvement in him."

"And I shall have to thank you more even than I do now," said Gyneth, with grateful earnestness.

"No: don't thank me at all, my dear,"—what a grave, gentle, elder-brotherly tone it was,—"let me feel that you trust me, and are able to make use of me sometimes, that is all I want."

Was it wonderful that when Gyneth knelt down in church, and prayed with deep earnestness for her brother, she did not rise from her knees without having given thanks for some one else? She had often been told that the possession of one real true unselfish friend was a great blessing, now she *felt* that it was so in her heart of hearts.

Mr. Willis's sermon was very beautiful; one of the most beautiful that Gyneth had ever heard. There was something of the same quaintness of style, and—when he began—something of the same slow formal manner which she had often remarked in his conversation, but either these peculiarities became less marked as he went on, or the increasing interest of his words made her cease to notice them. The text was part of the 48th verse of the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians; "As is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly;" and something in Mr. Willis's treatment of it recalled to the two cousins their springtide conversation in the porch of Traversham church.

Mr. Grantham was the first to allude to it. "It is strange," he said slowly, "how completely some seem to bear 'the image of the earthy,' and how much more difficult it is to picture them to oneself as being transformed into the image of the heavenly than others. I am not thinking now of the broad distinctions between the good and bad, but of the apparent difference of nature in those who are alike striving after goodness and purity. Some right things, such as a single aim, habitual recollection of unseen realities, love of meditation and prayer, indifference to the good things of this world, seem to come so much more easily to some

people than to others ; you made me feel that in the spring, the day we went to Traversham together."

" Did I ? I thought it was you who had called my attention to what is I suppose the old difference once so plainly recognised between the contemplative and the active nature. But in putting the contemplative so far above the active are you not almost overlooking the fact that it too has its temptations, and that some of the active virtues may be as difficult to it as those you have named are to the opposite disposition ? "

" Perhaps so ; but still I think that such a nature is more easily trained, ripens sooner towards perfection, requires less of the stern discipline which is often needed, and—thank God !—is sent, when it is needed, to train those of more eager, passionate—in a word—*earthy* dispositions into something like what they ought to be."

" And then how noble they become !" said Gyneth, her eyes kindling ; " oh, Lewis, you *must* let me admire them, the strong, clever, hard-working people who are alive to everything, who do not go sleepily and stupidly through life, but enjoy all that is beautiful and pleasant so intensely, to whom labour is delight, and who do with all their might whatsoever their hand findeth to do ! I know there is a danger of their being too much taken up with this world's interests, but when they have overcome that danger, and are looking steadfastly forward to the life of the world to come, then I do think they are of all people the most admirable."

" What a little enthusiast it is !" said Lewis, half smiling ; " but, Gyneth, to overcome that danger is sometimes the work of a whole life, and those who are only beginning to conquer are far from being ' admirable ' ; and often present a sorry spectacle enough. You don't know how strong

the temptation is now and then to give the struggle up altogether, and enjoy oneself after the old Epicurean fashion! (taking 'enjoyment' in an intellectual, not a material sense.)"

"I should think it more natural to give it up and be miserable."

"Be miserable! oh most dolorous of little philosophers! I flattered myself you had forgotten all about that over-fatigued Lord Ronald, who must have been what the radical papers describe as 'an effete member of the aristocracy.'" Then changing his bantering tone for one gravely and quietly earnest, he added, "I have thought you looking brighter than you used to look, spite of your anxiety about Lawrence, and I am hoping to see you thoroughly happy some day. Happiness is as good for you as it is bad for me."

"Bad for you!"

"Yes, but never mind that, the grapes are sour, you know. Granny was saying—."

"Oh but I do mind."

It was too dark for him to see the beseeching gaze in which the short exclamation ended. Gyneth longed to ask him why he, of all people, should think happiness out of his reach, but she had never yet ventured to press for more of his confidence than he seemed inclined to give; she would almost as soon have thought of taking a liberty with her father as with Lewis.

He did not make any answer to her exclamation, but quickened his pace till she could hardly keep up with him, then begged her pardon, and walked slowly and silently for the rest of the way.

However if happiness were out of the question for him—oh what was that mischievous little Rose about?—cheerfulness certainly was not. When Gyneth came down, after taking off her bonnet, she found him chatting pleasantly with her grand-

mamma, and he seemed to enjoy the sacred music which she played at his request even more than he had been used to do.

Moreover she heard him whistling—and most beautifully he could whistle,—over his toilette the next morning, and his last words to her were the laughing ones, “I hope I shall soon hear that the effete aristocrat has received honourable interment, and that you are no longer inclined to echo his valedictory lamentations.”

When Lawrence bade her good night on that Sunday evening, he showed her a glimpse of a freshly written letter which he had in his pocket, and said confidentially, “I’ve done it at last.”

“Written to papa! Oh I am very glad, how good of you, dear Lawrie.”

“No, nonsense, and I have not written to papa either, but to mamma; if he must be told she will tell him for me, and surely it is quite as right to confide in the liebe Mütterchen as in the Herr Papa.”

Gyneth would not show any disappointment, and wondered why she should feel any. She repeated Lawrence’s information to her cousin before breakfast the next morning, and he too received it in silence, though with the little impatient frown which was his ordinary token of displeasure. And when she had turned away he muttered to himself the one word, “Coward,” though his brow cleared again directly, and his greeting to Lawrence when he appeared was as good-humoured as usual.

Mrs. Deshon’s answer came by return of post, and after reading it through more than once, Lawrence passed it on to his sister. It was most tenderly affectionate, and not at all reproachful, though somewhat regretful, and graver than Mrs. Deshon’s epistles usually were. The necessity of telling her

husband, and the grief that *he* would feel seemed uppermost in her mind, but she bade Lawrence not be afraid of his anger, and wrote with a spirit which Gyneth admired, "I must not have you fancying that papa will be hard on you ; his 'strict notions,' as you call them, are not one whit stricter than they ought to be, some day you will be proud of having such a father." Yet was it not partly Mrs. Deshon's own fault that while her children had not even a proper fear of her, they were overmuch afraid of the father, whose love was to the full as tender, though not as partial nor as demonstrative as her's ?

It was not without some sinking of heart that Lawrence set off on his homeward journey, and Gyneth who was grieving in secret over the parting with her grandmother, was obliged to exert herself to cheer and encourage him. Their mother met them at the Harbournouth station, and very pleasant it was to both to find themselves so warmly and tenderly welcomed back to their home. "I have been so dull without you, my dears," she said, as she leaned back in the carriage, and looked first at one and then at the other, as if quite delighted to have the two young faces beside her again ; "and poor papa has been so worried ; no not about you, Lawrie," as she saw his alarmed looks, "I have not had the heart to tell him of that business, I must wait till things are going more smoothly in the regiment. What do you think that silly boy Anthony did the other day ? Brought a lighted lantern on parade with him, by way of showing that he considered papa had fixed the parade hour extravagantly early. I am really quite annoyed with him for being so childish."

"But surely, mamma," said Gyneth laughing, "that wasn't a very grave offence, it seems the sort of thing that a mischievous schoolboy might do."

"Yes, and in a schoolboy it would be all very well, but for a subaltern to do such a thing before all the men, setting an example of disrespect to his commanding officer, was too bad! How angry the Countess will be if she hears of it."

"And is papa so vexed about this freak of Anthony's then?" asked Gyneth, who was very much disappointed to find that he was still kept in ignorance of Lawrence's troubles, though her brother seemed almost relieved at this putting off of the evil day.

"Oh, it is not only that, but he has been trying to get up some manly sports among the men, and he is going to have something, 'an assault of arms' I think he calls it, in a week or two, but though some of the men have taken it up, others won't practise for it, and the sergeant who is the best single-stick player and everything else of that sort in the regiment, is very unpopular among his comrades for some reason or other, and so the whole affair is rather troublesome to manage, and poor papa has been a good deal worried about it."

All this certainly sounded rather disagreeable, but Colonel Deshon's worries were apt to be made a great deal more of by his wife than by himself, and the first sound that Gyneth heard when she entered the 'villa,' was her father's voice saying in most pleasant encouraging tones, "That's right, Edgar, keep that attitude, you'll be a capital fencer in a little while, now that you've learnt to handle the foils properly."

After which followed a clash of steel, and a peal of Edgar's melodious laughter.

The opening of the dining-room door disclosed a scene which somewhat reminded Gyneth of the rencontre between Jack the Giant-killer and the Giant as depicted in one of the favourite old books of her childhood, for the little trim, agile figure in

the short velvet tunic, with one hand holding out the glittering foil, and the other tossing back the thick curls of golden hair, that *would* catch in his wire mask, was just such a graceful manikin as those wondrous fairy champions of olden time; and his tall, manly opponent, with that firm quiet air of strength, and assured skill, looked quite as formidable an adversary for such a wee fellow, as the giant for Jack, fierceness only excepted.

Edgar had his face towards the door, and obeyed his father's cry of "Disengage!" in its literal not its intended sense by leaving off fencing; and flinging off his mask, ran up to Gyneth, threw one arm round her, and held up his lips to be kissed, still keeping firm hold of his weapon with his other hand.

"We've been fencing, and I've run papa through the body, at least I should have run him through, if the foil hadn't had this button at the end of it, and I can parry very well now, and make feints and all that," he exclaimed, in a tone unusually eager and animated for him, "but I want somebody to practise with, and Fanny won't let me run her through the body, she says she doesn't like it, and besides, papa does not like her fencing much, so I'm very glad Lawrie's come home, for perhaps he'll play with me, I know Bertie would if he were here."

To this speech succeeded the display of a variety of "feints," concluding with a series of wild flourishes intended to make Gyneth's hair stand on end by their reckless daring, but pooh-poohed by Colonel Deshon as being mere "child's nonsense."

"Bertie wouldn't believe his eyes if he saw you rampaging about in that way," said Lawrence, "I thought you were afraid to touch anything bigger than a pin."

"Not now," said the father, laying his hand on

the curly head, "we have just discovered that we have a vocation for the army, and are ambitious of having 'a red coat and a sword just like papa's,' so of course all baby-terrors are going to be conquered."

"And papa is going to teach me to play single-stick, so soon as I can promise not to cry when I'm hit," confided Edgar to Gyneth, in an important whisper. "I went to see Mr. Armstrong play with Sergeant Cooper, and it was so jolly, only I was always afraid they would hurt each other."

There was something so droll in Edgar's newly acquired manliness, that Gyneth could not help laughing, even his choice of words was more boy-like, and less fastidious than it used to be, some weeks before she would no more have expected to hear him talking about a thing being "jolly," than to find him ambitious of learning so rough a sport as single-stick.

But oh, how pleasant that he could be taught thus happily to himself the courage and self-control, which Lambert had learnt by such hard and painful discipline! The eldest son had been experimented on,—not an uncommon lot perhaps for the first boy in a family, though the experiments are widely different in their nature,—and the youngest was profiting by the experience thus gained. If the father, who had never known what it was to feel fear himself, was sometimes almost provoked into severity by the unreasonable timidity of his little son, there needed but the thought of that other son—whom such severity had cured, indeed, but cured at the price of all that familiar, and unconstrained intercourse, which may and should exist between parent and child—to bring back the abiding gentleness which strove to accomplish by patient encouragement what had once only been thought attainable through a harsher medium.

Gyneth, who was sufficiently courageous, and an admirer of courage, to be able fully to sympathise with Colonel Deshon, was at the same time womanly enough to be able to lavish equal sympathy on her brothers, so she wore a happy face for Edgar's sake that day, and smiled up radiantly at her father, at each fresh exploit of the once timorous little champion. It was well for her that she could so enter into home interests, or too many thoughts might have been wasted on Lewis Grantham's perplexing hints, more especially on the assertion so strangely implied, that complete earthly happiness was as much out of his reach as the fabled grapes were out of that of "Monsieur le Renard."





CHAPTER XXII.

"One by one thy duties wait thee,
Let thy whole strength go to each,
Let no future dreams elate thee,
Learn thou first what these can teach.*

ADELAIDE PROCTER.

HE month of December brought with it joyful anticipations of Jeannie's return from abroad, and Lambert's return from college, and of that Christmas gathering at which the grandmother was to make acquaintance with all her son's children, as well as with that new claimant to the title of grandson, whom neither she nor Gyneth could help considering as a stranger, though by the other members of the Deshon family, "Alfred" was almost as familiarly regarded as Jeannie herself.

But the younger Mrs. Deshon had two problems to solve, which perplexed her somewhat in their different ways, one being how the villa could be made elastic enough to hold Jeannie and her husband as well as the grandmamma, the other how she could decently avoid asking Lewis Grantham to join their family party on Christmas day. Yet spite of her inhospitable intentions towards him, she could not help feeling a little grateful to Mr.

Grantham for his kindness towards Lawrence, for he had sought out Heinrich Müller at considerable trouble to himself, and finding the young German on the point of returning to Bonn, had paid over to him with proper business-like precautions, a sum sufficient to acquit Lawrence of his debt, leaving his young cousin to repay him or not as he felt disposed.

Immediate repayment was of course Lawrence's desire, and Gyneth hoped that this would bring about an explanation with his father, but it did not, for his mother supplied him with the necessary money, and begged him "not to worry papa about anything till after that tiresome 'assault of arms,'" which owing to the illness of one of the intended combatants had been put off for a week or two. Gyneth disliked this system of concealment so much, that she could scarcely bring herself to believe her father's comfort was really secured by it; and that it was bad for her brother she felt sure. It was hard to keep back any expression of disapproval when the subject was discussed before her, and once she did venture on a very gentle pleading remonstrance; but her mother only laughed and said, "Wait till you are a wife and a mother yourself, my dear, before you decide against the wisdom of biding one's time, when one has to make disagreeable revelations," and she shrank back into silence, almost feeling herself as undutiful as Fanny, who had lately fallen into disgrace with her father, for openly declaring "That she didn't think a thing a bit more right because mamma said it was."

It was well that Mrs. Deshon had not left her preparations for her guests till the last moment, for about a fortnight before Jeannie and her husband were expected to arrive, she received an invitation from Lady Eyneford, to pass a little while

with her in London, and now she was able to accept it with a safe conscience, feeling that all at home was in readiness for the reception of both the grandmamma and the younger visitors, the difficulties occasioned by want of space having been got over by clever contrivance. The elder Mrs. Deshon had begun to fear that her visit would be inconvenient, and had written to beg "dear Fanny not to put herself out of the way for her, but to let her come at another time when the house was not so full :" but a pretty little note had travelled back by return of post, intreating in the younger Mrs. Deshon's most caressing words that dearest grandmamma would not disappoint her, and dear Edgar, and all the young people of a Christmas visit, to which she described them all as looking forward, not forgetting to add, that the delightfully elastic properties of the villa made it quite convenient for housing a large party.

And then with this problem happily settled, and the one about Lewis Grantham left in abeyance, Mrs. Edgar Deshon started off in a comfortable frame of mind to enjoy her stay in London. She was to stay with the old Countess till Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson arrived, and then to take them back with her to Harbournouth, meantime there was a good deal of amusing sight-seeing and shopping to be got through, and she would have enjoyed herself most thoroughly if only she had had her husband or one of her children with her. Lady Eynesford's invitation had extended both to Colonel Deshon and to Gyneth, but the Colonel could not conveniently be absent from his regiment just then, and his wife was so afraid that he might be lonely, and his comfort not properly cared for by the servants, that she would not have consented to leave him if Gyneth had not begged to be allowed to remain at home, promising to undertake

all the duties of housekeeping, and to do her utmost to be companionable to her father.

There was something absurd, as Mrs. Deshon herself remarked, in the idea that while the mother looked forward eagerly to a London visit, the daughter did not care about it, but so it was; though hidden in her heart, Gyneth kept one regret, "If I had gone to London I might have seen Cousin Lewis, and heard some of the beautiful music that he has so often described to me," and as she sat quietly through the home-evenings, playing waltzes and galoppes to her father, vague melodies of another sort floated in her ears, and there came a longing indescribably strong to hear again such grand, beautiful harmony as had once and only once, fallen on her ear when Lewis had taken her—a little girl of twelve then—to hear an oratorio.

Mrs. Deshon left home on a Monday, and though Lambert was expected to return from college on the Friday following, the intervening days would have been rather dull to Gyneth, but for the unexpected arrival of some inanimate but most welcome and eloquent companions in the shape of some interesting new books.

When Gyneth and Lawrence returned from a drive on Tuesday afternoon they found at the door a tall gentlemanly youth, encumbered with a parcel of considerable dimensions, which the fastidious Master Lawrie would have thought it far beneath him to carry, but which seemed to give the stranger no manner of uneasiness. He took off his hat to Gyneth, inquiring in a very frank voice though with rather a bashful manner if she were Miss Deshon, and adding that his own name was Boyd, and that he had been entrusted with a package of books for her by Mr. Grantham. Gyneth, remembering what her cousin had said of Alexander

Boyd, and divining that he had taken this way of making them acquainted with him—since his plan for having Lawrence in London had failed, Colonel Deshon having objected to any further interruption of Lawrence's studies—begged the youth to walk in, and did her best to draw her brother into the conversation which followed. Alexander's was a good and clever face, not a handsome one, and every now and then a gleam of something higher than its ordinary expression of boyish frankness reminded Gyneth of his sister's face, which she had once or twice seen coming in or going out of church, and which had left an ineffaceable impression on her. It was not beauty or intellect which had made it remarkable, it was the sort of "clear cool kindness, the lunar beam," which overspread the whole countenance, and there were moments when the young brother's face had the same shining look. Oh, if the acquaintance with Alexander led to an acquaintance with his sister! Gyneth's shy smile stole out at the very thought.

When young Boyd took leave of them, Lawrence volunteered to walk across the common with him, a most unusual effort at friendliness, which Gyneth gladly encouraged. Since that confession to his mother, Lawrence had avoided the barracks, and Anthony being rather out of favour for his lantern freak had not been with them as much as usual, so that Lawrence was really in want of some young companion of his own sex.

Gyneth, left alone, was not slow in undoing paper and string, and examining the books which Mr. Grantham had sent her. They were not all for her, one or two were directed to Lambert, but hers were the very books she had been most wishing to see, a different style of work from those she could get in the circulating library at Harbournouth, as Lewis had discovered from some casual

remarks she had let fall during her visit to her grandmother. On a strip of paper placed between the leaves of one of them were these words in her cousin's characteristic handwriting, "My dear little philosopher, I want an excuse for introducing Alex. Boyd to you, and an excuse for sending you Mr. Helmore's last book, and a few more which I should like you to see, so I hereby make one motive do duty as excuse for the other. Lady Eynesford has invited me to dine with her to-morrow, to meet your mother, it will be rather a pleasant party, I imagine ; meantime I am told *you* prefer the attractions of Harbournouth. Don't think it necessary to write formal thanks, but if you like the books tell me so.

"Your affect^{**} cousin,
"L. C. GRANTHAM.

"P.S. I suppose you have heard from granny that the Burnabys are at home again."

Was that a pleasant note or not? Gyneth could not decide, but in proof that she was not quite a sentimental young lady, it may be recorded that she did not ponder or dream over it, or weigh the signification of the address or the signature.

With the reflection, "At any rate it was very kind of Lewis to send me these books, I daresay he thought I should be dull without mamma," she drew one of the volumes towards her, and began to read. And oh, what an advantage have those who are fond of reading over those who do not care for it, in hours of loneliness, or anxiety, or disappointment! Under the pressure of a very great or a very fresh sorrow it is not to be supposed that many can find solace in reading, except in that one Book whose Divine words have comforted so many mourners; but in lesser trials, and more especially in one which like Gyneth's is not

consciously acknowledged as a trial at all, surely there can be nothing which so freshens, and rouses, and finally cheers the mind as the perusal of some really good, original, suggestive book, be it fact or fiction. Lawrence did not return for some time, and Gyneth read on, and on, quite absorbed, quite happy. Every now and then the thoughtful eyes were lifted from the book, and fixed on the fire near which she sat, she was thinking out some proposition of the author's; perhaps she agreed with him, perhaps she did not, the exercise of thought was pleasant all the same. And then there were little bits to be read to her father in the evening, to see if he agreed with them, and this other book would perhaps interest Lawrie, while that deeper one must be enjoyed alone. Oh, Mr. Grantham, if you had seen Gyneth's radiant face as she gathered her new treasures in her arms, and exultingly displayed them to her father when he came in, you would have had proof positive that your present was not thrown away! If you have been unconsciously the means of planting in your little cousin's heart a secret stifled pain, it must at least be said for you that you have also been the means of giving her many keen pleasures like that of to-day. You almost deserve forgiveness even for that tiresome little postscript of yours about the Burnabys, which would have been so much better left out.

Between the new books and her new duties as housekeeper and companion to her father, Gyneth's time was well filled, and she was not especially delighted when on Wednesday morning there was put into her hand a package containing twelve very hideous little Dutch dolls, and a note from Mrs. Parry, asking her "to be so very kind as to dress them for a Christmas tree which dear Mrs. Gordon was going to have for the children

of her school," and hinting that "dear little Fanny would no doubt be glad to help her, doll-dressing was such a nice amusement for little girls."

"Dear little Fanny" was by no means so charmed as Mrs. Parry had fondly hoped, and would fain have persuaded her sister to send the dolls back again with a scornful little note of excuse, but Gyneth was too goodnatured for that, and stitched away with exquisite painstaking neatness at doll-garments, neither asking nor receiving any aid from Fan, until the evening after Lambert's return home, when seeing how hard she was working, and hearing how many dolls remained to be clad, he insisted in his quiet way on Fanny's trying to help her. *One* doll dressed in all the colours of the rainbow was the result of Fan's reluctant industry, and Gyneth always believed that Lambert had done at least half of it, undeterred by Lawrence's satirical allusions to "men-milliners, and nice young men who when invited to small tea-parties might be asked to bring their work in a sociable way!" Yet Gyneth, as she sat by, quietly working, and smiling at the nonsense that went on around her, almost wondered at the liberties which were taken with her elder brother by both Lawrence and Fanny. *She* never could help feeling a little afraid of him, and now that he was fast developing into a man there was a graver dignity about him than ever, and he was losing somewhat of that feminine delicacy of complexion which had made him look younger than his actual age. She felt more than ever constrained with him, and for the first day or two after his return did not venture to try to draw him into any of those confidential discussions on art, duty, &c., which she had been wont to enjoy with him when he was at home before. But one morning, when they sat

together at the breakfast table, Colonel Deshon having made a hurried meal and gone out, and Lawrence and the children not having yet come down, Lambert replied to a lament of Gyneth's over the time that was wasted in waiting for the unpunctual ones, by the remark, "You seem to have a great deal to do now, Gyneth, is it only that you are undertaking mamma's duties, or have you found some more duties for yourself than you could discover when I went away?" and this seemed to invite her to confidence.

"I scarcely know," she answered, smiling, "whether I am really more busy, or whether I have only learned the art of making believe to be busy, but I arrange my days a little more on system than I used to do, and I'm rather afraid it has the effect of making me impatient when my plans are defeated by circumstances."

"And what would you be doing now according to your system, if our unpunctual juniors did not keep you waiting here?"

"Well, I have not anything exactly assigned for this hour, you know we are breakfasting earlier than usual to-day,—so please do not be vexed with the children for not being down,—only I have some books that I read in odd scraps of time, and I was thinking if breakfast had been over sooner, I might have had half-an-hour's reading before going to give cook orders about dinner."

"If you will tell me what book you want, I will get it, and you can read now, I shall not think it rude."

"Oh, thank you, but the children will be here directly, I daresay, and besides, I like talking to you, Bertie. I want to know if you don't think Edgar looking stronger than he did in the autumn."

"Yes, much; and how pleasant it is to see the terms he is on with papa; if you have helped to

bring that about, Gyneth, you have done what Edgar will have cause to thank you for all his life."

"But really, Bertie, it is no doing of mine; papa began to see that Eddie wanted his care, and ever since then he has taken oh such pains with him. I think it was your being away that made him feel this, while you were at home Edgar seemed to want nothing but you."

"It was not the right order of things though," said Lambert, "and I am very glad it has been put an end to, I can see that my influence is gradually becoming only secondary with Edgar, as it always ought to have been."

"And you are glad? oh, how good of you! I was almost afraid you might be vexed."

He turned on her that look of grave wonder which always had the effect of making her ashamed of the words which had called it forth, but apparently did not think it worth while to attempt a reply.

"I ought to have known that you were above being jealous," she observed apologetically, "but I used to think that it must be so pleasant to you to feel that Edgar loved you better than any one in the world, and would do for you what he would not do for any one else."

"If I did find it pleasant that is all the more reason why I ought to be glad that it is over, or nearly so." He spoke coldly, and with no touch of self-pity, but his sister shrank with pain from a theory so sternly ascetic, and pleaded almost passionately against it.

"Ought we never to rejoice in being loved? Is it wicked to long to be loved first and best by some one person? Oh, Lambert, I cannot think that! If indeed we find that no one does love us best, then we must try hard to be content, and not

be jealous or angry about it; but to be *glad* when some child or some friend who has preferred us ceases to do so! oh, if to be good one must feel that, I can never be good at all!"

He was evidently surprised to find that she felt so warmly on the subject, and answered in calm common-sense tones, "You will at least admit that I ought to be glad that papa's influence and authority are beginning to have more weight with Edgar than mine; it was quite a wrong state of things that he should obey an elder brother better than his father or mother, and in my opinion it was scarcely more right that he should love me better than them, though that perhaps was not so much my fault as the other part, it was more accidental."

Gyneth gave a great sigh of perplexity. "Do you mean to say, Bertie, that you think the fact that *you* made Edgar what he is, and that he has hitherto owed almost everything to you, is a subject for self-reproach? I should have thought you might have been proud of your work."

"Proud of having been so cowardly as to try—unconsciously perhaps—to keep Edgar under my own rule lest my father's should be too harsh for him! Gyneth, I cannot be too grateful to you for having helped, as I am sure you have, to restore matters to their right position, and so save Edgar from the consequences of my undutifulness."

"Bertie, I wish you wouldn't say such harsh things of yourself," said Gyneth, quite distressed, "I *did* think that Edgar was a little too much disposed to set your opinions and wishes above papa's and mamma's, but indeed I did not, and do not, suppose that it was in any way your fault."

"It was though, it all arose from my contemptible cowardice!"

She could see that it was only by the force he

was putting upon himself that he could preserve that cold composure of tone. Oh how she longed to comfort him, to make him less bitterly dissatisfied with himself.

"Even if it were cowardice, though I can scarcely think so, surely there was a great excuse for it in your case. And Bertie, you *must* let me tell you how I admire the unselfish pleasure you show in seeing papa's great kindness to Edgar, you who were so differently dealt with! Many people in your place would be jealous."

"Then they would be brutes!" said Lambert, with unusual energy, "and Gyneth, I do not like to hear you imply that papa was ever otherwise than kind to me."

"No, I know he meant it kindly, but it was *very* hard. Lambert, I sometimes think now that you must have been almost wretched when you were a child, though I never suspected it then. I can scarcely ever remember seeing you cry, you weren't half so tearfully disposed as Edgar is."

"I didn't dare to be, and besides, I don't think I found it so difficult to bear pain as he does, though I was such a wretched little coward about facing danger, or what I imagined danger. I had bad health, and that sometimes depressed me, besides the feeling that do what I might I never could be what my father would have liked to see me—open, and fearless, and manly, but pray don't imagine that I was wretched, I was nothing of the sort. Think how kind mamma and Jeannie were to me! (and papa, too, whenever I behaved myself sensibly,) and how many pleasures were provided for us all, far more than most children have."

"And now that you have better health, and have won papa's good opinion, which you used so to despair of, are you happy, Lambert?"

"If I am not," he answered flushing, "it is my

own fault, but the fact that papa has become resigned to me, and no longer thinks it worth while to blame me for anything, has its painful side as well as its consoling one. If it were only in my power to really satisfy him, to give him *real* pleasure, such as he can feel in some of his other children! But never mind, forgive me for being so abominably egotistical. Shall I cut some bread for the children? I think I hear their voices on the stairs."

He had gone into his shell again, bitterly ashamed probably of having allowed his sister to draw him out of it for awhile, and for the rest of the meal seemed entirely occupied in providing the little ones with bread and butter, and listening to Lawrence's grumbles at things in general, and early hours in particular.

Gyneth had never heard him say so much about himself before, and his last words left a painful impression on her; but she had not time to ponder over them, for she was a busy little woman now, in her own small way. Orders to the cook, adding up of accounts, letters to her mother and grandmother, an hour's practice on the piano, half-an-hour's steady reading, and the repairing of some broken toys of Katie's filled up the morning; then in the afternoon her father took her and the younger ones for a long walk, and in the evening she played to him, read some magazine-articles at his request, beguiled Lawrence's tedium by challenging him to a game of chess, and filled up the intervals with doll-dressing. Between the time at which she returned from her walk, and the hour of dinner, she had fulfilled a new duty which she had taken on herself,—the teaching their young house-maid to write. The girl was about to be prepared by the Rector for Confirmation, and finding that he was accustomed to give questions to his candi-

dates to be answered in writing, Gyneth was anxious to atone for the deficiencies of Harriet's education, as regarded caligraphy, by careful instruction from herself. She had therefore established a daily writing lesson, and already Harriet's copybook gave proof both of her own willingness to learn, and of the zeal of her young instructress. Moreover Harriet had a laudable ambition to be able to repeat the Church Catechism without a single mistake, when Mr. Weatherhead should require it from her ; and as she had not a good memory, and was rather nervous, she was very grateful to Miss Deshon for allowing her to say it over to her now and then, "to see if she didn't really know it quite perfect this time."

In this, and one or two other ways—such as lending them books—Gyneth could feel that she was of some little use to the servants ; and, perhaps, this helped to comfort her for not being allowed to exert herself among the poor ; she was doing the duty that lay nearest to her, and did not sigh so much as before after the more distant ones, though she would not have been one whit less ready to undertake them had it been put in her power to do so. As she lay down each night she had no temptation to be over-satisfied, or to think she had done great things ; the record of the day's doings seemed very small and poor, and yet it was enough to keep her from dejection ; she was actually beginning to forget "Lord Ronald," and to feel with a modern poet :

"Life has more things to dwell on
Than just one useless pain,
Useless and past for ever ;
But nobler things remain."



CHAPTER XXIII.

"Say, did impatience first impel
The heaven-sent bond to break?
Or couldst thou bear its hindrance well
Loitering for JESU's sake."

Lyra Apostolica.

 N one of Gyneth's busy mornings she was surprised by a visit from Mr. Parry, who came as the bearer of a note from his wife, begging that "dear Miss Deshon, whose kindness in undertaking to dress the dolls she—Mrs. Parry—felt very much, would be so very good as to get them finished if possible in a day or two, as dear Mrs. Gordon was going to have her school-feast earlier than had been at first intended."

"The feast is to be during Advent, then?" inquired Gyneth, in some surprise, "I thought it was to have been during the Christmas week, I think Miss Weatherhead told me so."

"Yes, and the Rector adheres to that; but Mrs. Gordon is going to spend Christmas with some relatives of her's, and of course she wishes to have the feast before she goes, and the consequence is that the two schools are to have separate treats, instead of being all together. I hope you will come to Mr. Gordon's feast, Miss Deshon?"

"Thank you, I must not promise; but it is very kind of you to wish it. Will you please tell Mrs. Parry that she shall have all the dolls to-morrow? I will set to work at once, and finish them. I hope they are smart enough," and she took one from her workbasket, and held it up for him to see.

"Too smart, *I* should say; but my wife and Mrs. Gordon will like them all the better, and be very much obliged to you; I cannot persuade them that it is putting worldly vanities into the heads of the children to give them dolls decked out in silks and satins and beads, like ball-going ladies."

"I must show you one I have dressed in a blue woollen frock, and little white cap, and white tippet, like those quaint looking charity-school children that one sees sometimes; perhaps you will like that better," said Gyneth, wishing to avoid the controversy; but to her intense surprise Mr. Parry replied, "Ah! Miss Deshon, it is easy to turn these questions aside, but some day there will come a time when the hollowness of your present life will strike you very forcibly. Though I have known you but a short while, I can feel that your's is not a mind which can long rest satisfied in mere worldly pleasures, dress, and gaiety, and all those poor vanities which Paul warns us against in his Epistles."

"I should be sorry to think that those things *satisfied* me now," said Gyneth, gently.

The young officer replied by quoting with great earnestness of manner the text, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate;" and unbecoming as Gyneth thought this familiar use of sacred words, she listened reverently, and made no comment. That silence, and the grave, thoughtful look of the sweet face puzzled poor Mr. Parry, he was more used to be met with warm opposition, or good-humoured ridicule.

"I don't know how it is, Miss Deshon," he went on in a reflective tone, "but I can't quite make out either you or your brother Lambert; there is a something about you both which makes me hope that you have the root of the matter in you; and yet he, at least, I am sure, is resting too much in mere outward forms, bowings and scrapings, and lighted candles, and perpetual church-goings, as if salvation were to be found in such things as that."

What Mr. Parry could possibly mean by "scrapings," and why he should suppose that Lambert placed any peculiar trust in the efficacy of "lighted candles," Gyneth could not conceive; but the subject was too grave, and he too completely a stranger to her, for her to wish to enter into argument with him. She made a slight exclamation expressive of dissent from his remarks, and went on with her sewing.

"I have a real interest in your brother, I can assure you, Miss Deshon," pursued Mr. Parry, in no way discouraged; "I never knew a man of his age so perfectly pure-minded and conscientious as he is; but what is that to trust to after all? The most wretched sinner, who puts his trust in the free grace of the Gospel, is better off than the best of those who are trusting in their own merits, and vain Tractarian superstitions, for safety."

The young officer delivered this last remark with a most crushing air of superior wisdom and enlightenment, which sat very oddly on his simple, boyish face, and had evidently been caught from some leader in his favourite school of theology; but he shrank a little from the ardent indignant pain in Gyneth's eyes as she looked up with the involuntary exclamation, "Mr. Parry, I am sure you cannot really know my brother, or you would not misjudge him so strangely, the very most

striking part of his goodness is his humility and self-distrust."

"Yes, I know he is very humble, but there is such a thing as 'humble pride,' as Mr. Gordon told us in his sermon last Sunday, trusting even to one's own humility to save us. Still, I don't mean to say that your brother does this, only his goodness always seems to me of the same sort as that of those old saints that one reads of in books, and I doubt whether that's the right sort, though, of course, the High Churchmen say it is."

The light in Gyneth's eyes flamed higher.

"I cannot see," she said, "how *real* saintliness can be supposed to proceed from any other source than faith in the King of Saints, and a desire to be like Him; the Church of Rome has indeed given the name of saint to some who have done very foolish and even very wrong things,—judging by our standard,—but you can't, surely, suppose that Lambert wishes to imitate *them*."

"I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, I'm sure," said Mr. Parry looking contrite, though unconvinced; "I'm afraid I have offended you. Lavinia would have managed better."

Not so thought Gyneth; she preferred Mr. Parry's most solemn denunciations to Mrs. Parry's giggles, and really gave him credit for the best intentions possible, painful as what he had said was to her. "I am not offended indeed," she answered gently, "only I hope some day you will see that you have misjudged my brother and those who think like him, though to them it can signify little what is thought of them."

"We are forbidden to judge one another," said Mr. Parry, "and I hope I shall never feel otherwise than charitably towards even the most misguided of my fellow-sinners; my object in commencing this conversation was not to pronounce judgment

on any one, but to try to persuade you, Miss Deshon, to interest yourself in some of my wife's schemes for the good of the poor heathen in this town. I can assure you from experience that you would find such work far more satisfying than the dressing and ball-going and studying accomplishments which fill up your time now. When I lived for the world I never knew what happiness was; it is not to be found in such things."

He scarcely looked as if he had found it yet, but in a broad sense his words were true, and Gyneth answered rather sadly, "I hope I may some day be able to do something for the poor, if I do nothing now it is not so much from choice, as because I am not thought fit."

"Who doesn't think you fit? Why shouldn't you be as well able to collect pence for Bibles and to teach in the Sunday-school, and to join Mrs. Gordon's Dorcas meetings, as other young ladies?"

It was the old question—with a little difference in the employments proposed—which Gyneth had asked herself again and again. Why, indeed, might she not do these or similar things? was not every Christian meant to be useful, young Christian ladies as well as any others? was not such usefulness urged in books, shown to be possible by example, inculcated in sermons, insisted on by good people of all shades of opinion? Only,—and there was a great deal in that only,—it was forbidden to her for the present by those whose authority she was bound to respect, and therefore wishes were vain, and repinings wrong.

"Papa and mamma can judge best what I am fit for," she answered steadily, even with a smile; "and they do not wish me to undertake any of these things just at present; unless a Sunday-class should become vacant in the girls' school, they

would have no objection to my taking that if Mr. Weatherhead approved."

Mr. Parry had often confided to his wife a secret opinion that Mrs. Deshon was worldly, and Colonel Deshon "lukewarm;" but fortunately, plain-spoken as he was, he was not quite bold enough to express this opinion to Gyneth. He contented himself with solemnly shaking his head, and looking unutterable things. "Do they name any age at which they would consider you fit?" he inquired, after a moment's pause.

"No."

"And meantime you don't care much about it, I suppose," he said, in rather a reproachful tone, mistaking her gentleness for indifference. Her heart swelled, and the ardent spirit within her seemed to throb and tremble with suppressed eagerness, but she answered as composedly as might be, "There is a great deal to interest and employ me in my home, and I can try to learn things which will be of use hereafter."

Mr. Parry glanced at the opera-airs lying on the music-stand, the half-open volume of Dante on the table near, and a little basket of feather-flowers which Gyneth had begun to fashion into a wreath for the hair, and looked incredulous. "If I were not afraid of appearing rude I should ask you what can be the possible use of *that* thing," he said, indicating the wreath with rather a contemptuous gesture.

"To wear on my head," said Gyneth, smiling; "mamma brought these flowers from abroad for me, and I am going to wear them at a Christmas party."

After such a confession as this, Mr. Parry seemed inclined to wash his hands of her altogether, and leave her to her fate; artificial flowers in the hair were somehow inseparably connected

with "worldliness" in his mind, though in a bonnet they did not seem to him so objectionable, judging by the toleration he extended to the scarlet poppies which Mrs. Parry was accustomed to wear on Sundays. It never occurred to him that Gyneth who happened also to dislike wreaths—not as a matter of conscience, but as a matter of taste—and who was privately of opinion that they were not at all becoming to her, had made a little sacrifice of vanity and self-will for the sake of pleasing her mother; and that the sweet-tempered, obliging spirit which she was thus cultivating in little things would be of use to her hereafter in whatever situation she might be.

He rose up and shook hands with her in solemn silence, but came back before he had reached the door, and said with a smile, the first she had ever seen on his face, "I shall hope to see you a convert to our opinions yet, Miss Deshon, Lavinia must have a talk with you, what I know of these things I learnt from her, and I'm afraid I don't always do credit to her teaching. I blunder, while she goes straight to the mark: she has had some conversations with Armstrong lately, and he's becoming quite a changed man."

Gyneth was aware of a peculiar meaning in the tone of these last words, she had had reason to suspect before that the Parrys guessed at Mr. Armstrong's admiration for her and encouraged it, while at the same time they ascribed the greater earnestness and anxiety to do good, which they had lately observed in him, not so much to her influence, as to their own, and that of certain tracts, which they had given him to read. Fortunately, no reply was needed on her part, for just at this moment Edgar raced into the room, exclaiming, "Gyneth, here's Miss Weatherhead, she's come to talk to you, while Horace looks at my fencing

things," and in another second the stately Augusta made her appearance.

"How d'ye do, Miss Deshon? I ought to apologise for such an early visit, but we met your little brother, and he insisted that Horace should come in with him for a few minutes, so I hope you will excuse our intruding on you," said Miss Gussie, always composed and correct in demeanour. "Good morning, Mr. Parry, I hope Mrs. Parry's cold is better, these east winds are very trying."

It was fine to behold the gradations of civility both in tone and manner, as Augusta addressed Gyneth and Mr. Parry alternately; she patronised the former with the utmost graciousness, to the latter she was coldly condescending, evidently bearing in mind his heterodoxy, and want of submission to her father's authority. He returned her greeting abruptly, and took his departure, treating Gyneth to an admonitory shake of the head, intended to warn her against the influence of this supercilious little lady, of whom it is to be feared he had quite as bad an opinion as she could possibly have of him.

"What an extraordinary young man he is!" said Augusta, when he was gone, "We met him at dinner at the Gordons' the other day, and he talked in the most wonderful way; I think he really requires to be kept at a distance, there is no knowing what he might say to one."

"I think he means very kindly," said Gyneth, "but certainly he is rather odd."

"And his wife does dress in such bad taste; fancy, she had a jacket trimmed with blue, and a green velvet bow in her hair, wasn't it dreadful?"

"Sir Gardner Wilkinson says in his book on 'Colour and Taste,' that some people have no perception of harmony in colours, or the want of it," answered Gyneth, smiling, "perhaps that may ac-

count for Mrs. Parry's peculiarities of costume. Have you read the book, and do you remember the strange instances he gives of colour-blindness?"

Augusta had not read the book, but she perceived that Gyneth did not care to talk about Mrs. Parry's dress, and acquiesced in the change of subject. "Apropos of colour," she said, "I can't get the paint to lie smooth in those illuminated scrolls I am doing; I don't know how it is that the one you have lent me as a pattern is so smooth, you must have used different paints I should think."

"Would you like to try my paints?" said Gyneth, rising to fetch them, "I thought you told me that yours were just the same, but you are quite welcome to take mine home with you, and see if they will answer better."

"Oh, thank you, and do you think you could design another capital 'D' for me? papa doesn't like the one in your scroll much."

Augusta did not think it necessary to say that she herself had tried to design a D, and had signally failed in the attempt; but she was grateful to Gyneth for her ready promise of help.

"I shall be exceedingly obliged to you, Miss Deshon," she said, "I really have not much time to spend in trying to design things, there is so much to be seen to at Christmas, clothing-clubs, and distributions of blankets, and bread-tickets, and then the preparations for our school-feast. I am rather glad the two schools are not to be together, if they were to be, Mrs. Gordon would want to manage everything."

"But that would at least save you some trouble," suggested Gyneth, a little mischievously.

"Oh, I don't mind trouble, and I am anxious that all should be managed as papa would like, no one can know his wishes so well as I do."

"You must be very useful to him," acquiesced Gyneth, mildly.

"Yes, and it is so pleasant to feel that one could not possibly be done without."

"I don't know," hesitated Gyneth, "I think it is Miss Nightingale who says that one's aim ought to be to arrange matters, so that if one were taken suddenly ill, or anything of that sort, all might go on as well or nearly as well without us, as it could with us; not to make *ourselves necessary* so much as to provide that what is necessary should be done, either with us, or without us."

"I don't understand that," said Augusta, "who could be to papa what I am?"

"No one, indeed; I only meant that if I were at the head of the house I should feel more comfortable in knowing that I had taught the younger ones and the servants to understand papa's likings and to study his comfort, so that if I were to be laid aside he would still be attended to as far as possible, and all go on as he would wish it; than in thinking that he could not possibly do without me."

"That is very well in theory," said Augusta, "but you would not find it easy in practice. I adhere to the old rule, 'If you want a thing done well, do it yourself.' I think servants are almost un-teachable."

Gyneth gave one of those soft looks of surprise which Augusta characterised as "Miss Deshon's languid way of being astonished," and as she offered no remark Miss Weatherhead went on,

"I suppose you can scarcely judge how much depends on me at home, but surely you would not like to think that *you* could be done without, though you have not the management of a household as you were supposing just now."

"I don't *think* that I could be done without, I

know it, but that is for a different reason from the one that I was supposing, it is because I am of so little use at any time."

"But doesn't that worry you? I should hate not to be of use; how can you bear it?"

"I don't bear it, at least I bear it very badly, I'm afraid," and having said this, Gyneth began to speak of something else.

But her thoughts recurred to that subject, and to a saying of her grandmamma's, that the call to greater usefulness often came through sorrows, and was less to be ardently desired than patiently waited for, as she sat tête-à-tête with Fanny that evening; her brothers having gone with Colonel Deshon to the long-talked-of assault of arms. She expected them back about ten o'clock, and as they had dined earlier than usual, had some supper prepared for them, and was dreamily collecting together her fragments of silk and lace, to make room for the supper-tray, when a loud ring at the front bell, and hurried footsteps on the stairs, announced the return of at least some of the party. She turned towards the door with a glad look of welcome, her hands full of gay-coloured silks, her mind on "hospitable thoughts intent," but it was only Edgar who entered, and he did not bring back the happy face he had taken with him, but had a strange expression of fright and misery, and even before he reached her, broke into a fit of bitter sobbing, mixed with a few incoherent sentences, of which "Bertie" and the "horrid, horrid sword," were the only words audible. A vague feeling that something dreadful had happened seized her, and with an injunction to Fanny to take care of Edgar, she ran down to the hall, where she heard Lawrence's voice speaking to Ellis. He turned round as she approached, "Gyneth, there has been an accident, and Lambert's hand is hurt, they are

going to bring him home in a fly, but I ran on with Edgar to prepare you. I was telling Ellis to run out and see if Dawson is in the stable, he had better not go home to-night, he may be wanted to send somewhere."

"Oh yes; go, Ellis, please. But, Lawrence, is Bertie much hurt? how could it have happened?"

"Why, I cannot wait to tell particulars—but you know Sergeant Morrison was going to cut an orange through on the palm of the hand as a test of skill?—Well, none of the men would hold out their hands to have it done,—they all hate Morrison!—and so papa held out his, and Morrison cut an orange clean through on it without hurting the hand in the least. So then papa asked if no one would follow his example,—how cool he is! never stirred a muscle of his face, stood as firm as Wilhelm Tell junior,—and when he found that none of the men moved, he appealed to some of us who were sitting by. Who should answer the appeal but *Lambert*, of all people in the world! He got up, and came forward, very pale, but with wonderful *sangfroid*, and I think all would have gone right, if, just as Morrison was in the act of striking, that wretched child Edgar had not set up a scream, which startled him, and threw both him and poor Bertie off their guard; the sword went through the orange, but it made a great deep cut in *Lambert's* hand as well."

"Oh," said Gyneth, shuddering, "is it *very* bad? was there a doctor there to bind it up at once?"

"One of the surgeons had been there, but had gone away; however, Armstrong ran after him, and brought him very soon, but before he came, *Lambert* had fainted from loss of blood, though papa did his best to keep the cut closed. It's a dangerous part for a cut," and Lawrence shuddered too, and was evidently so much alarmed that he could

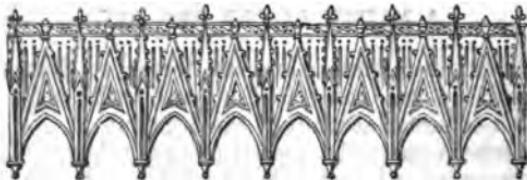
not help communicating his terror to Gyneth, though he had controlled himself sufficiently to give a coherent account of the accident.

"I must see if Lambert's room is ready,—what a pity mamma is not here,—and I had better tell nurse and ask her not to go to bed, she may be useful," said Gyneth, gathering up her senses, and trying not to give way to vague fears, though her heart was sick with apprehension, "try and comfort poor little Edgar, dear Lawrie, I am afraid he is more wretched than any of us."

"Little coward!" said Lawrence, indignantly.

"Oh, don't!" she turned round, with one foot on the stairs—"if Lambert had never been taunted with cowardice, perhaps he would not have thought it necessary to do what he did to-night. How I wish he hadn't!" and she went sorrowfully up to the nursery.

What a peaceful scene she found there! Nurse mending socks by the light of a candle which was carefully shaded from falling on the face of little Katie, who slumbered peacefully in her crib, her dark curls marking the outline of her small head on the pillow. Softly as Gyneth spoke, the child woke up, stretched out her arms with the sleepy murmur, "What zoo saying?" and reassured by a kiss fell asleep again, happily unconscious of any cause for anxiety. Gyneth sent Harriet to sit by her, and took nurse away to Lambert's room to see what preparations had best be made there. Then when those were accomplished, there was nothing to be done but to return to the drawing-room, soothe and caress the sobbing Edgar, and wait with what patience and courage she could for the sound of the carriage which was bringing Lambert home.



CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Who is the Angel that cometh ?
Pain !
Let us arise and go forth to greet him ;
Not in vain
Is the summons come for us to meet him ;
He will stay,
And darken our sun ;
He will stay
A desolate night, a weary day.
Since in that shadow our work is done,
And in that shadow our crowns are won,
Let us say still, while his bitter chalice
Slowly into our hearts is poured,—
“ Blessed is he that cometh
In the Name of the LORD !”

ADELAIDE PROCTER.

THAT has been well remarked that when the carvers of those strange distorted faces which leer at us from the gargoyle of our mediæval churches wished to represent in them the truly horrible and repulsive, they did not do it by making them grandly tragically evil, but by throwing into their hideousness a grotesque and even comic aspect, which, perhaps, makes us smile at first sight of them, but ends by inspiring us with intense repulsion and disgust. And in the trials that beset us throughout life, there is perhaps nothing that so sickens and pains

us as the absurd, un-heroic, nay even comic element which not infrequently mingles with them. In history, and in most poetry, events march grandly, tragedy is purely tragic, sombre, and terrible, there are no ridiculous little circumstances mixed up with it, and the sufferers nerve themselves heroically to endure these grave dignified sorrows which appeal to all that is noble and hero-like in their character. But who does not know that it is otherwise in common life? That in the most anxious sorrowful moments of our lives absurd little incidents occur, ridiculous allusions are made, things happen, words are said, which would amuse us were we in a mood to be amused, and which do indeed at times provoke a sort of hysterical laughter far more distressing than tears.

This painfully grotesque element was not wanting in Gyneth's present trial. While she sat waiting in the drawing-room, trying with gentle words to soothe Edgar into patience and hope, and every now and then pausing at some distant sound, and listening in a silence so intense that she seemed to hear her own heart-beats, there came a ring at the door-bell, and Ellis hurrying up stairs with most unwonted activity, put into her hand a small parcel, saying, "Something from the barracks, Miss." She opened it hastily, wondering a little at its size, but nothing doubting that it contained some note from her father, and Edgar lifted his white, terror-stricken face from her shoulder, in eager breathless expectation of what the news might be, when behold the paper contained nothing but two tracts, entitled respectively, "Are you happy?" and "Words of warning to the worldly-minded!" Gyneth's name was written in one, and Lambert's in the other, "with Mr. Parry's best wishes" appended; and Fanny, with the exclamation, "Fancy Bertie being worldly-minded!"

burst out laughing, which so enraged poor Edgar, that—not having a better weapon at hand—he took up a handful of the Dutch dolls and threw them at his sister. One struck her in the eye, and elicited the ludicrous howl by which Fanny was wont to signalize any accident that happened to her, and Gyneth, who was trying to bear the disappointment in silence, and straining her ear to catch the faintest sounds in the road, was obliged to use her efforts to pacify Edgar, who was beside himself with grief, and to lessen poor Fan's sufferings from her eye by bathing it with rose-water. Half the dolls were scattered on the floor, and one which lay on the table had had some of the paint washed off its face by Edgar's tears falling on it, and presented such an absurdly rueful appearance that Gyneth was almost moved to a smile as she took it up and placed it with the others, which she had collected together in her work-basket. Lawrence wandered up and down the room, cutting off a corner of cake whenever he passed the supper-tray, and occasionally offering some to Edgar, who rejected it with mournful disdain; and altogether there was a tedious sense of commonplace discomfort pervading the party, which would have been laughed off in a minute had they been in their usual spirits, but which now made the anxiety and suspense that had produced it more difficult to bear.

Yet Gyneth's own calmness and sweetness made an atmosphere of repose about her, of which she was herself unconscious, but which had its effect upon the younger ones. Fanny—seldom moved to any outward token of affection—kissed the soft hand that was bathing her eye, and as soon as Gyneth returned to her chair, Edgar nestled down his head on her shoulder again, and clung to her as if only through her could he find patience and comfort.

And when the waiting-time was over, and Lambert had been brought home and laid on his own bed, if she shuddered and sickened for a moment at the sight of his deathly white face, and the crimson stains on his clothes, she soon recovered courage, and it was she who received the doctor's directions, saw that all that he required was brought, and kept Edgar and Fanny out of the room. The best surgeon in the town had been sent for, but happened to be dining with his sister, who lived some ten miles from Harbournouth, and though a message had been despatched thither after him, he had not yet arrived. The young regimental doctor, whom Mr. Armstrong had brought, succeeded at length in stopping the flow of blood from the severed artery, but was nervous and inexperienced, "could not tell what might be the consequences of the wound," was alarmed at Lambert's continued insensibility, and agreed with Colonel Deshon in heartily wishing that Dr. Sutherland—the senior surgeon of the regiment, a man of great skill and experience—had not happened to be on leave. The Colonel was calm, cold, and silent as usual, but one look at his face told Gyneth how he was suffering, and when he followed her to the drawing-room for a minute he sank down into a chair, and turned almost as pale as his son. She brought him a glass of wine, and he recovered himself, thanked her, and observed, "Your mother will be here early in the morning I trust, Anthony has kindly gone to fetch her: I did not like to frighten her by a telegraphic message. Where is Edgar? Try and get him to bed, I am afraid he will make himself ill." And having said this, he went back to Lambert.

To get Edgar to bed was not very easy, he had indeed fled away to his room directly he heard his father's step in the passage, and there Gyneth

found him, in the dark, and crouched up under the table, as if to hide himself, but he was not in the least inclined to go to bed, and was distressed at the notion that she could think it possible for him to sleep while he was so unhappy about Bertie. She tried to persuade him to let Harriet make up a bed for him in the nursery, which would be less dreary than the loneliness of his own room, but he would not consent to this at all, declaring that he only wanted her, and that if she could not stay with him he would rather be alone. "I am afraid I cannot stay with you, my darling," she answered, "but I will come backwards and forwards; and now let me help you to undress, you can keep awake if you like, but indeed you must go to bed, for papa wishes it, and even sorrow mustn't make you forget to be obedient."

How thankful she was for that teaching of Lambert's which had rooted this principle of obedience in Edgar's mind! He got up directly, and began to unfasten his things, looking the picture of misery, but no longer rebellious. But when she asked him if he could spare her while he said his prayers, promising to come back soon and tell him how Lambert was, he threw himself on the floor in a fresh burst of weeping, and sobbed out, "I can't, I can't say them. I've been a wicked coward, and made Bertie be hurt; Lawrence said it was my fault, and that papa would never forgive me, and Bertie's going to die perhaps, and you won't let me see him, I shall try to die too!"

Gyneth was longing to be in Lambert's room again, but how could she leave Edgar in this state?

"Hush," she said, speaking as firmly as she could, though very, *very* tenderly, "you mustn't say such things, there is no reason to think that Bertie is going to die, though he is very much hurt. Come, and kneel by me, and let us ask God

to make him better, and to forgive you for being cowardly, and help us all to be patient and brave."

"I can't, I'm too wicked, I made Bertie be hurt."

She saw that he could not separate the fault, which was in itself but slight, from its terrible consequences. That almost involuntary scream of his had indeed been the apparent cause of the accident, and he could not see that it was really far more excusable than many of the childish frights which he had yielded to without having felt himself in fault at all. She tried in a few words to set this before him, and succeeded in getting him to kneel beside her, and say Amen to the prayer she offered.

"God will hear *you*, sister," he said tremblingly when she had finished.

"He will hear us both, for CHRIST's sake, that is our trust you know, Edgar," was her whispered answer, and she left the poor little boy with his eyes turned upwards to a picture which Lambert had given him, of our SAVIOUR as the Good Shepherd, gathering the lambs in His arms.

She meant to ask her father to go to him for a minute, and assure him that his want of self-control was completely forgiven, sad as its results had been; but when she left his room she found that the second doctor had arrived, and that Colonel Deshon was engaged with him. She passed on to the drawing-room, found Fanny ready to accept the offer of a bed in the nursery, which Edgar had declined, on condition that Gyneth would come and tell her "as soon as Bertie was better," and despatched her thither accordingly. Then she was turning away again, but seeing that Lawrence was crouching over the fire, looking listless and miserable, she came back to kiss him, and ask if she could do anything for him.

"No, but had you not better sit down?" he an-

swered, rising, and offering her his chair, "You will knock yourself quite up. As for me I feel perfectly *abîmé*, it makes one wretched not to know exactly what one has to fear. I wish that doctor would make haste and come out! I want to hear what he thinks,—and this was to have been quite a pleasant evening, the beginning of our Christmas gaieties! Well 'l'homme propose, Dieu dispose.'"

"It is 'Dieu' though," said Gyneth, with thankful, confiding trust.

He glanced up at her, as she stood beside him with her head a little bent, as if meekly bowed to the acceptance of whatever God might send; for her there was no such thing as blind chance, or remorseless fate, she recognised the fatherly Providence which orders all things well.

"How old are you, Schwesternchen?" he asked, gazing at her with some wonder.

"Eighteen: we want mamma, don't we, Lawrie? to comfort papa, and to tell us all what to do; I feel so helpless."

"I was thinking that you seemed just the reverse; I wish you could stay with me; when I am alone I keep seeing Lambert, as he stood up with his hand stretched out, and then the gleam of the sword in the air, and—oh, I can't describe it, it makes me sick to think of it."

"How was it, that Edgar didn't scream when the orange was cut through on papa's hand? that, as being the first experiment, must have been almost more terrifying."

"One would think 'so, but somehow papa took it so coolly, I didn't feel half so nervous myself that time as I did when Bertie stood up: and I fancy Lambert kept Edgar quiet then, whereas no one thought of him afterwards.'" "Why didn't *you* think of him?" Gyneth was tempted to reply.

"I don't believe papa dreamed of there being

any danger, he had seen Morrison do the trick before, and indeed he had shown his skill as a swordsman in other ways to-night, so that I don't suppose any accident would have happened, but for Edgar's scream. Papa was quite pleased at Bertie's coming forward, thinking it would shame the men, he thought *them* a pack of cowards evidently, but really without being at all cowardly one may not want to run the risk of an awful cut for no particular purpose. I can't understand how Bertie ever made up his mind to stand the trial, he never used to be famous for courage."

"Oh, but I can understand quite well," said Gyneth, "I know he has longed for an opportunity of doing something to please papa, and show that he has got over his cowardice, or perhaps I should rather say learned to control it; I suppose he is what is called an heroic coward, for I don't think courage is quite natural to him even now; but oh, what self-command he must have! Lawrie, I think he is quite a hero!"

Her eyes sparkled with enthusiastic pride and delight, but only for a minute, then the thought of his danger and suffering came back, and the triumphant smile died away. "Poor fellow, poor Bertie," she added musingly, in a low tender tone, as if speaking to herself, but she started at a sound in the passage and exclaimed, "Dr. Randolph is coming out!"

No, it was Colonel Deshon, and in answer to her breathless "Well, papa," he said, despondingly, "Lambert is no longer insensible, but I am afraid our cause for anxiety is not lessened, Randolph speaks very seriously of the case, he sees symptoms of tetanus."

"What is that?" inquired Gyneth and Lawrence together.

"What is commonly called locked-jaw, though

that term only partially describes it; Randolph says it rarely follows on wounds of incision, and seldom comes on so rapidly as it appears to be doing in my poor boy's case, he thinks Lambert must have been predisposed to it, and also," instead of finishing the sentence the poor Colonel turned away his face.

"Also what, papa?" asked Lawrence eagerly.

"That"—by a great effort Colonel Deshon had regained his iron composure—"his being exposed to the cold damp night air, after having been in the overheated atmosphere of the room where the games were held, was the worst possible thing for him. I kept open the window of the fly thinking the fresh air would help to revive him, little knowing that exposure to cold is one of the most frequent causes of tetanus. Elliston ought to have warned me, but he is young and inexperienced, and the danger did not occur to him."

"That is surprising, for one always hears that wounds across the hand are frequently followed by locked-jaw," replied Lawrence, "I remember being told so from my cradle upwards."

"Yes, but that is a popular delusion; however do not wait to discuss it, I want you to ride to the railway-station for me,—I have ordered one of the horses to be saddled,—Randolph is writing a message which you must despatch by telegraph to —— (naming a celebrated London surgeon), I cannot be satisfied without having the best advice. Of course I could send a servant with the message, but I thought you would be glad to do this for your brother."

"Yes, oh yes, many thanks," said Lawrence, starting up, the thought of Lambert's danger having banished, for this night at least, the selfish laziness which too often made him unwilling to bestir himself for others.

"Put on your great coat then, I will see if the message is ready," said his father, turning to go, but at the door of the room Lawrence stopped him. "Papa, is there not,—I mean, is not locked-jaw generally fatal? Does Dr. Randolph say we may hope?"

"He tells me so; it is not *always* fatal: we must pray, my son, that is better than hoping."

The almost stern calmness of tone softened somewhat in these last words, 'the prayer of faith' was the one thing which saved this calm hopelessness from hardening into despair.

Gyneth had not uttered a syllable; but now, as her father passed to Lambert's room, she followed him, and said, "May I come, papa?"

"Yes, come," he said, taking her hand in his; "this is a hard trial for you, my little girl."

She looked up at him with eyes full of love. "Don't think of me, papa; I will try to bear it. We can pray, as you say." And then they went together into the darkened room.

Even in the dim light Lambert perceived their entrance, and his blue eyes beamed a faint recognition on Gyneth, as she bent over him; but when he tried to speak, his voice had a strange huskiness, and there was a most peculiar expression on his countenance, resembling a painful smile, but caused, as Gyneth was afterwards told, by incipient spasm of the muscles of the face, one of the symptoms which had given alarm to Dr. Randolph.

"Don't let papa grieve—I am better," he said; but even as he spoke a spasm seized him, and Mr. Elliston, coming forward, forbade his attempting to speak.

Gyneth sat down beside him, while her father and Dr. Randolph went into an adjoining room. She was silent, but her gaze seldom wandered

from his face, except when now and then it turned to a print of the Crucifixion, the sole picture in this plain bare-looking chamber which she had often longed to render more comfortable, without however venturing to do so, as her mother had declared that "Lambert liked it better as it was."

Oh, if Mr. Parry's words had been true,—if she had been obliged to believe that Lambert was trusting to his own good deeds or to "vain superstitions" for safety,—how doubly sad would have been her thoughts as she watched beside him now! But though these words sometimes returned disagreeably to her recollection, she felt their falsity too strongly to be really troubled by them. Lambert might be mistaken on some points, though she was far from agreeing with Mr. Parry as to what these mistakes were; might, in crushing the self that he abhorred, have sacrificed some innocent tastes and affections which he should rather have cultivated reverently and thankfully: but who, that knew him as she did, could doubt for a moment the existence of that humble, loyal faith, which, though seldom put into words, was shown forth in his every act?

She wondered whether he was aware of his own danger, and knew the nature of it; also, whether he were suffering much. He did not utter a single groan or sigh, or make the slightest gesture of impatience; though once or twice his eyes turned wistfully to some little books which were lying on a table at his bedside, as if he would fain have sought comfort from them. Gyneth took up one of them, but found that the darkness of the room was too great to permit of her seeing to read, and bethought herself of repeating something to him instead, having first obtained permission from Mr. Elliston, who, since she came in, had moved away to the fire, almost out of ear-shot,—though not out

of sight of his patient's face,—and who did not embarrass her by seeming to listen when, in a trembling voice, she began to repeat some of the Psalms which she knew by heart.

After a few minutes passed in this way, Dr. Randolph came back, and insisted on Lambert's trying to take some food,—an effort so painful, that Gyneth first wished they would not press it ; changing her mind, however, when her father drew her aside, and explained, "It must be done ; he needs all the support he can have, and we fear the difficulty of swallowing will be still greater by and by."

"How patiently he tries to take it!" she said, her eyes filling with tears as she watched him.

"Yes, and so he did when they gave it him before, after just a minute of hesitation, as if he were making up his mind to it."

"Oh, but papa, it wasn't *that*," said Gyneth, earnestly, "at least not this time, I am sure;" but she did not like to go on and explain her meaning, which was, that what Colonel Deshon called a "minute's hesitation" was a minute passed in saying inwardly the silent grace, without which Lambert—so frequent observation had led her to believe—never partook of any food. Instinctively she had become aware of some of her brother's secret observances, but she would no more have thought of betraying them than her own. She was sometimes startled and almost awed by the tokens she discovered of the habitual devout recollectedness of his life, so uncommon at his age, —perhaps, alas ! it might be rather said at *any* age ; —but she kept these discoveries hidden in her heart, a secret sacred and precious, as all such secrets should be.

After watching him for a few moments, (though

standing a little behind him, knowing the discomfort of feeling oneself looked at,) first trying to feed himself with his left hand, then growing weary and faint, and submitting to be fed by the old nurse, who had often performed a like office for him in his infantine days, Gyneth stole away to Edgar's room. The sight of this touching helplessness unnerved her more than anything. She was glad to brace herself again by the remembrance that Edgar looked to her for comfort, and that she must try to speak calmly and hopefully to him. True to his word, the poor child had kept awake, and was sitting up in bed, waiting and watching, and sometimes reading a few verses in his little Testament.

"When S. Peter cut that man's ear off, our SAVIOUR made it well again," he said; "and so He can make Bertie's hand well, can't He, sister?"

And thus, in thinking of our dear LORD's power and love, he had found comfort for himself; and though Gyneth dared not now tell him that his fears of Bertie's danger were exaggerated, for alas! they had proved only too well founded, she could yet leave him with less anxiety than before, and the trust that, ere long, his calm weariness would subside into sleep. Fanny was sleeping already, as Gyneth found when she visited the quiet nursery, in which the only sound was the deep, regular breathing of the three sleepers,—the two little girls and Harriet, who for that night had taken nurse's place.

Lawrence had not yet returned from the railway station, and as pale streaks of dawn became visible in the sky, Gyneth concluded that he was waiting to meet his mother, who might be expected to arrive by the earliest train. This conjecture proved correct; for about an hour later, when these pale

streaks had ripened into the red glow of a winter's sunrise, a fly containing Mrs. Deshon and Lawrence drove up to the door.

Gyneth ran down to meet them with the news that Lambert was dozing a little, which Mr. Elliston thought a good sign; (Dr. Randolph had gone away to visit another patient, promising to return as quickly as he could;) and after an exclamation of thankful joy at this, her mother's words all related to Colonel Deshon, about whom she seemed, if possible, even more anxious than about Lambert. Hearing the sound of wheels, he came to the head of the stairs; and at sight of him his wife flew past her daughter, straight into his arms.

"Have you wanted me, Edgar? I came as soon as I could. Ah, I see you are desponding, my dearest; I was afraid you would. Try to hope the best, as I do."

"Yes, we must try," he answered wearily; "but I can see little ground for hope. He may linger three or four days; that is the commonest period of death, Randolph tells me, in cases of acute tetanus."

"But this may not be acute. Let us wait and hear what Dr. —— says; Lawrence tells me you have telegraphed for him, and we looked about us at the station, almost hoping he might have come by this train, but that was scarcely likely. He will, perhaps, come by the next."

"Perhaps. Fanny, I can scarcely ask you to forgive me, this accident has been so completely my fault."

"No, no, no; I shall never believe that! And you are not to make me miserable by reproaching yourself: promise me you will not."

She clung to him, and kissed the sorrowful set lips, as Gyneth had longed, yet not ventured to

do ; but he withdrew his hand from hers, very gently, and turned towards his son's room again.

"Come, come and see your poor boy ; your light tread will not wake him. The others are cared for ; Gyneth has seen to them ; and now that you are here, we had better send Gyneth herself to lie down, had we not ?"

"I am not tired, thank you, papa," said Gyneth, who was close at hand. "Mamma must need rest more than I do."

"No, for I am strong, and you are not, my pale child," said Mrs. Deshon, looking at her fondly ; "go and lie down for an hour, while your brother is sleeping. I will call you, if you are wanted."

She went, with the same obedience that she had exacted from Edgar, first looking in at him, to see if he were asleep, which he was ; and though, when she lay down, she felt painfully awake, her mind full of vivid memories, fears, and anticipations, drowsiness stole over her at length, and she too slept, though quite determined to wake before the hour was over.





CHAPTER XXV.

“ We are so unlike each other,
Thou and I, that none could guess
We were children of one mother,
But for mutual tenderness.
Thou art rose-lined from the cold,
And meant verily, to hold
Life’s pure pleasures manifold.”

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

“ **D**ARLING, do you know me ? I have been waiting here to surprise you as soon as you should wake.”

Whose voice was that ? what face was that, pressed so lovingly to Gyneth’s, kissing her lips, her cheeks, even her poor tired eyes ?

She opened those heavy eyes wider, to scan this fair face with its fresh roseate tints, then she clasped her arms round the bending neck, and cried out, “ Jeannie !” in a very ecstasy of delight.

Yes, it was Jeannie herself, in round-cheeked blooming loveliness, her golden hair gleaming through the meshes of her dark chenille net, her complexion brilliant in red and white, and an air of health and prosperity about her which seemed to extend even to the tips of her soft fingers.

“ Are you wondering how I got here ? ” she said.
“ Alfred and I arrived in town last night, and when I sent my maid to Lady Eynesford’s this morning

to inquire if mamma were there, she brought back the news of dear Bertie's accident, so we came on here at once. Darling fellow! they won't let me see him, lest the agitation should do him harm; but Dr. —— came down in the same train with us, and he has seen him, and says that the case is not so bad as the other doctors thought; he does not think the disease is acute, and he hopes by careful treatment Bertie may get over it. Is it not a relief to hear that?"

"Yes, indeed," said Gyneth, springing up in the might of a fresh hope; "Jeannie, you have brought sunshine with you."

"Have I? Alfred says you all began to despair too soon, poor papa always looks at the worst side of things, he quite made up his mind that Bertie was going to die that time that he was so ill in Corfu."

"I suppose I am like him," said Gyneth, "for I scarcely dared to hope last night; but now we may hope again," and she drew a deep breath of thankfulness, "Does Eddie know the better news? I am afraid I have slept a long time."

"Not half long enough, you look as if you wanted rest, my poor darling, but perhaps a cup of tea will refresh you; I will go and fetch one, and when you are dressed you must come down and have some breakfast. Alfred is making Edgar eat some; poor little thing! he looks quite drooping and won't let himself be comforted."

"Does mamma seem hopeful?"

"Oh, yes, almost her own bright self, but I only had a few words with her while Dr. —— was in Bertie's room. She seemed rather anxious about you, but I told her that I would do my best to persuade you to rest, and eat, and do everything that is proper; so you must submit to a little petting, my dear, *dear child*," and with another warm,

fond embrace the elder sister went her way down stairs: soon reappearing, however, with a cup of tea, and some tempting, wafer-like slices of bread-and-butter.

" You must promise me to drink this, darling, for I know it will do you good," she said, tenderly, " I wish I could stay and help you to dress, but Mr. Elliston has come down and wants some breakfast, so I must go back. Mamma asked me to be tea-maker this morning."

And accordingly when Gyneth after a rapid toilette descended to the dining-room, she found Jeannie sitting at the head of the table with Katie on her knee, and Mr. Hutchinson actively waiting on Colonel Deshon, who was snatching a hurried breakfast, sorely begrudging the time spent away from Lambert.

" Glad to see you, Gyneth. How are you? Rather knocked up, I'm afraid. Shall I cut you some ham? or would you prefer this egg? Edgar, pass the salt this way, there's a good boy." Such was Gyneth's greeting from her brother-in-law, and certainly it confirmed her preconceived impression of his being peculiarly matter-of-fact. But his fresh-coloured, good-looking face was rather prepossessing in its way, spite of a certain truculent "don't-attempt-to-impose-upon-me" air, not uncommon among prosperous, young Englishmen, and he was of that broad-shouldered, powerful, eminently manly type which, as being the opposite of anything weak or effeminate, Gyneth was rather disposed to admire; so that when an hour after—he being absent—Jeannie put the confidential question, " Do you think you shall like him, dear?" Gyneth was able to reply with perfect sincerity, " Yes, I think I shall."

He had gone into Harbournouth to engage rooms for himself, Jeannie, and Jeannie's maid, at

the best hotel, having declined to take up permanent quarters in the villa while Lambert remained so ill. "The mother,"—so he always called Mrs. Deshon,—"and her servants will have enough to think about, without having three more people on their hands," he said, in answer to Colonel Deshon's solicitations, "you must make us of any use you can, and then we shall be quite happy, much happier than we could be if we thought we were giving trouble: the little woman"—this was an appellation for Jeannie—"can stay with you all day, if you like, and I can come to and fro."

To this plan he adhered, being always ready to help when his help was wanted, and taking himself off when he found he was likely to be "in the way," and thus though not very sympathetic in manner he managed to evince in his actions real consideration for all the household in this their hour of sorrow. Gyneth was amused at the way in which he stirred up his wife to the activity which seemed to be innate in him, while it was difficult to Jeannie's somewhat indolent nature, but he was very tender and careful of her too, in a straightforward unsentimental fashion, and evidently the pair were—as poor Lambert had once said—perfectly well-suited to each other.

Darkness, silence, and the most perfect quiet had been enjoined on Lambert by the London surgeon, and accordingly, except his mother and the old nurse, who had constituted themselves his regular attendants, no one was admitted to his room but the doctors and Colonel Deshon. The two elder sisters felt this exclusion painfully. Fanny vehemently declared it "a great shame," and even little Katie put up many coaxing petitions to her father to be allowed to see "poor sick Bertie;" but Edgar, who might have been expected to be the most eager to gain access to his brother's pre-

sence, submitted in silence to the prohibition, and never once expressed a wish that an exception might be made in his favour. He was so listless and indisposed to occupy himself in any way that his sisters suggested, that Gyneth almost regretted its being holiday-time, thinking that the effort of preparing his tasks for Miss Manson would have roused him, and done him good. He dreamed away the day over a volume of Reztsh's Outlines, which Lawrence brought down for his amusement, hiding his grief in proud reserve and silence, except when, now and then, he found himself alone with Gyneth, who seemed to be the only person to whom he could bear to speak out his fears.

These confidential moments came but seldom ; for Jeannie was intent upon engrossing her younger sister for this first day at least, and Lawrence, Alfred, and Anthony Waller were constantly coming in and out to hear from the sisters the latest news of Lambert. Admittance was of course declined to ordinary visitors, but Mrs. Ross, hearing of Lambert's accident and Jeannie's arrival, came over in the afternoon, full of real affectionate sympathy, and prayed to be admitted on the score of her old friendship and warm interest in their troubles.

Not even her pleasure at seeing Jeannie again could keep the tears from her eyes when they told her of Lambert's sufferings, and their anxiety about him ; her quick, foreign sensibilities overflowed in a way which seemed almost strange to her English friends, while yet it made them love her even better than before. And when she was gone, the unsentimental Mr. Hutchinson actually delivered it as his testimony that "she was charming enough to make her Greek extraction pardonable, and the only woman he had ever seen who looked pretty when she cried ;" adding, for the benefit of his

wife and sisters, that it was all very fine for novelists to represent their heroines as looking lovely through their tears, but that such descriptions were perfect humbug, the prettiest women—even his own “bonny Jean”—looked ugly with red eyes.

Bonny Jean, not being of a tearful temperament, smiled serene in conscious loveliness, well-pleased that her husband should admire her more excitable little friend, and Gyneth did not hear his remark, for she had gone down to the door with Mrs. Ross.

“There is somebody waiting out there in the cold,” said the little Contessa, as she fastened her ermine boa more tightly round her neck; “somebody who was too humble to ask to come in with me, but who is very triste, and is sighing for one little word. Can you guess whom I mean?”

Gyneth was too truthful to affect ignorance. “I suppose you mean Mr. Armstrong,” she answered. “I was sure he would be sorry for us; will you please thank him, and say that Dr. —— gives us hopes of Lambert’s recovery.”

“Only that! my little snow-queen, I see even sorrow cannot melt you, but I must tell you that one reason why the poor Frank is so sad is, because he did not offer to be experimented on instead of your brother: it was not fear that kept him back; he would not have minded one bit, but he was having a little argument with my husband about another of Sergeant Morrison’s feats, cutting through lead I think it was, and did not notice what was passing on the platform. Now he reproaches himself, and says, ‘if he had had his wits about him he might have spared you this trial,’ but, poor fellow, he was not really to blame; was he?”

“Oh, no, indeed; pray don’t let him think so; even if he had come forward I doubt whether Lam-

bert would have given way to him, he was so anxious to please papa."

"Ah, the good son! I am so sorry for the poor Colonel, and for your mamma; give her my love; I shall not be happy till your Bertie is better. Have you written the sad news to the grandmamma yet? And the cousin, will not he be grieved?"

Ah, cunning little Mrs. Ross! You asked that question not so much out of compassion for Mr. Grantham as to see whether your 'snow-queen' would show more sensitiveness at the mention of 'the cousin's' grief than of that of Mr. Armstrong. And she did, not very openly perhaps, but by an involuntary trembling of lip and voice as she answered,

"Yes; Lewis will be very much grieved; he is so fond of Bertie. I wrote to tell him this morning; and papa and I both wrote to grandmamma: I am afraid it will be a great shock to her."

"Yes; you will be anxious to hear how she bears it. Let me know if we can do anything for any of you. I am so glad Frederick settled that we should go to his father at the new year, and not at Christmas; we should not like to have been so far away from you at this time."

Then as she tripped down the steps she pointed to a solitary figure waiting patiently at the garden gate, and added, "Ah, you see he has waited to hear what news I bring; he will want one little kind word to thaw him after having been frozen out there so long."

"Then you must be very kind to him, Photinée. I am sorry he should have waited out in the cold all this time. How frosty the air feels;" and closing the door, Gyneth ran up stairs.

Yes; she was very stony-hearted on the subject of Mr. Armstrong; she felt that herself; but how

could she be otherwise? If he would persist in wanting more than the kindly unembarrassed friendship she would have given him, what could she do but give him less? It pained her to be the cause of disappointment to any one, but she could not believe this disappointment to be very serious; how could any one care much whether *she* liked them or not?

It was with a sense of surprise that at this time of trouble she perceived by unmistakeable signs how dear she had become to her own household, how the children clung to her rather than to Jeannie, whom yet, if only as having been so much more with them, they might have been expected to love best, how Lawrence depended on her sympathy, how her parents seemed to trust in her to manage wisely all matters outside of the sick room, how even the servants showed affectionate care for her health and anxiety to spare her fatigue. A self-confident, self-satisfied person might have been puffed up by this, and believed it the result of their own perfections, but with Gy-neth it had what is surely the more usual effect, it made her feel very humble, very undeserving, and ready to ascribe it all to pure unmerited love and kindness on the part of her home-people. Her heart sang a low undersong of praise for this love and kindness so generously bestowed on her, while yet its chiefer feelings were busy with hope and fear and prayer on her brother's account.

The hours seemed to pass very slowly while Lambert lingered in the critical state which gave cause for so much anxiety, and though on the fourth day Dr. Randolph pronounced that the dangerous symptoms had abated rather than increased, thus bearing out the predictions of the London surgeon; grave apprehensions could not be at once dismissed. This was the day on which

the elder Mrs. Deshon was to have arrived at Har-bourmouth for her Christmas visit to her son, and Gyneth, who knew that her grandmother would have been happier in sharing their trial personally than in being kept at a distance from them under the idea of sparing her feelings, had pleaded that the original invitation might be adhered to. Colonel Deshon was half disposed to acquiesce, but his argument, "I don't think my mother ever heard of any one being in trouble without longing to go to them, and I believe, as Gyneth says, that it will be her desire to come to us now," was combated by his wife, who reminded him, "that dear grand-mamma was growing old, and had been but delicate lately, and that to be on the spot and know all the hourly alternations in Lambert's state, and be made to partake of all their varying anxieties about him, might do her serious harm. It would be much better to write as hopefully to her as possible, and ask her to defer her visit until Christmas Eve, when"—it now wanted nearly a week to that time—"Lambert might be better, and they might all be in more cheerful spirits."

And by really thinking and persuading her husband to think that this would be the most unselfish course to pursue, Mrs. Edgar Deshon gained her point, and Gyneth was disappointed. She owned indeed that her mother might be right, but she scarcely needed her grandmother's letters to convince her that the good old lady would have infinitely preferred coming to them at once, and only refrained from doing so from a perception that her daughter-in-law would think her in the way, and be more fretted than pleased by her help. Anxious to be of some use she begged that the little girls and Edgar too, if he were willing, might be sent to her; and Fanny finding that to stay at home was not to be with Bertie, since she was never ad-

mitted to his room, rather hailed the proposition, and hearing from Gyneth that her grandmamma had a great many books, and was very gentle, and not likely to find fault with her about anything, got quite into high spirits at the idea of the visit, and even inoculated Katie with a vehement desire to make acquaintance with 'kind g'amma' and see 'funny cousin Lewis' again. Their mother, who had hitherto rather opposed any plan for their visiting their grandmamma, now gave her consent readily, fearing, as she said, that the poor children were getting moped at home, and even urged her husband to insist on Edgar's accompanying them, on the grounds that a little change would be good for him, and that he was so sensible he could be no trouble to grandmamma, and might even help to keep his sisters from being so.

"Very true, Fanny, but I shall not insist," her husband answered quietly; "if Edgar wishes to go, he shall go; but it will surprise me if he does. I will go and speak to him about it."

He found Edgar crouching over the library fire, listening to Hans Andersen's story of "The Red Shoes," which Gyneth was reading to him, and told him of his grandmother's invitation, asking him whether he would like it to be accepted or not.

"If you want me to go, papa."

"I want you to go if it would be pleasanter and more comforting to you than staying at home; not else."

"I don't care for it to be pleasant!" said Edgar, in oh, such a dolorous little voice.

"You can't think about your own pleasure while your brother is suffering; is that it?"

"No," tremulously; then with a burst of sobs, "I should like some one to be cruel to me; I should like to have my tongue cut off, like Karen's feet were."

Colonel Deshon, utterly astonished and bewildered, looked towards Gyneth for explanation.

"Karen is the name of the little girl in the sort of fairy story I have been reading," she said; "she has her feet cut off as the only way to get rid of a pair of magical red shoes which have led her into vanity; but I don't know why Eddie should apply that to himself."

Colonel Deshon looked as if he scarcely knew which was the most foolish, Gyneth, or Edgar, or the story; and Gyneth, conscious that her abstract of it must have sounded very ridiculous,—pretty as she thought the fanciful little tale in reality,—blushed, and burying her face among Edgar's curls, whispered, "Tell papa, darling, what you meant."

"I shan't, I can't!" said Edgar, starting up to run away, indignant at his grief not being understood, but his father caught hold of him and said mildly, "Don't run away from me, my boy, tell me what you really mean; I have not forgotten you all these days, though perhaps I have seemed to you to think of nothing but Bertie."

There was a pause, for Edgar was half choked with sobs, but at last he managed to articulate, "I did it, papa, I did it with my scream!"

"And do you know, Edgar, I have been saying to myself that *I* did it, that if I had been a different sort of father your brother would never have thought himself obliged to stand such a dangerous test, nor should I have permitted it. You are too little now to understand what my fault has been, and I don't even wish to explain it to you; but I say this to show you that I can understand what you are feeling."

"Papa," said Edgar, awestruck at the grief in his father's voice, a grief so much deeper though so much calmer than his own; "if I might have

all the pain, and Bertie might be well, I shouldn't mind half so much, should you?"

"If we might be punished through our own suffering, not through the suffering of others! It is the desire of many of us, Edgar, but God sees fit that it should be otherwise. Only, my little man, we must learn to judge our faults by what they are, and not by what they have caused. Your scream was a want of self-control, that was all; you are not to fret your heart out over it; I mustn't have you do so."

"But you wouldn't let me see Bertie, papa, not even that first night when you let sister go into his room; and when you took Jeannie in yesterday to look at him asleep, you wouldn't let me come."

"And you thought that was a sign of displeasure? But I did not mean it so. If I could be sure that you would control yourself and not disturb him, I would take you into Bertie's room with me now for one minute, he had just dropped asleep when I left him."

"Oh, you may trust me, papa, you may indeed; I promise you I will not cry or make one sound, I will only take one look, and come away."

"Very well, I *will* trust you." And together they stole on tiptoe into the sick chamber: together they stood silent beside the bed. Then Edgar turned softly away, and at the door his father bent down and kissed him, he had kept his word.

After this Edgar never doubted again that his father had forgiven him, and when that evening the question was once more raised of whether he should be sent to his grandmamma, he pleaded to be allowed to stay at home, saying, "I couldn't bear to go away from papa and Bertie."



CHAPTER XXVI.

“ With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;
A rainy cloud possess’d the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.”

In Memoriam.

HEEN the two little sisters were gone away, the two elder ones drew closer together, and were able to enjoy uninterruptedly many long intimate talks, which to Gyneth—who hitherto had known so little of the pleasures of sisterly intercourse—had all the charm of novelty. The strangeness which she had at first felt with the other members of her family never came between her and Jeannie, they were cordial, loving, intimate friends, from that very first moment when their lips met, and Gyneth opening her sleepy eyes saw before her the realization of that vision of the lovely, golden-haired, bright-browed sister which had so often haunted her dreams.

“ Most loveable!” yes, Lambert had truly described Jeannie when he applied that epithet to her; most loveable she was, in her sweet womanliness, her delicate tact, her pretty way of looking, and listening, and seeming fully to sympathise, without making a single protestation, or uttering

a word which did not bear the stamp of sincerity. Perfect, limpid, guileless sincerity had been Jeannie's characteristic always, though her extreme sensitiveness to outward influences made her appear to think and feel so differently at different times, that had it not been for the face and voice so innocently open and true, a stranger observing her might have been tempted to think her *insincere*. She could sympathise with her friend Photinée's indignant patriotism, and yet listen patiently and placidly to her husband's strictures on "those rascally Greeks;" could admire and reverence Lambert's asceticism, and yet assent to her mother's axiom, that "so much of what was beautiful and pleasant would not have been put in the world unless people had been meant to enjoy it;" could understand and enter into Gyneth's ardent desires to be of use in her generation, and yet was content to confine herself within a somewhat limited sphere of duty and interest, without one ambitious longing after anything beyond. She had no original ideas, and very few spontaneous emotions, but she had in a striking degree that appreciative talent which enters into and enjoys the ideas of others, and there was so much sympathetic warmth and tenderness in her nature, that whatever others were feeling she in a measure felt too. Clever people, or those of decided character like her husband, anyone, in short, with a marked individuality of their own, nearly always liked her, nay very soon loved her, feeling the charm of her intelligent sympathy, and well content with her measure of intellect, because it sufficed to enable her to understand *them*; commonplace people, who admired her beauty and gentleness, and sought no deeper, liked her too; but people who had *some* ideas of their own, and craved to hear more and better from others, children with in-

quiring minds wanting to be amused and informed, and made to understand their own aspirations, all those, in fact, who wanted a spur rather than a pillow, felt no very warm sentiment for Jeannie, only the gentle regard which it would have been impossible not to feel for anyone so lovely and sweet as she. Thus it was that Fanny and Edgar, though they were fond of their eldest sister as a matter of course, had not near so keen a feeling of affection and admiration for her as for the less-generally attractive Gyneth. But to Gyneth herself this difference was not apparent; it was she who unconsciously gave the tone to their conversations, and she credited her sister with a full share of the deep thoughts and high aspirations which in truth originated with herself, though as they talked, Jeannie adopted them by sympathy, and even reproduced them in other words. And it was so pleasant to be loved and understood, especially just at this time when there was a burden of sad anxiety pressing on her which would have been very heavy if borne alone. How much Lambert suffered: what he was feeling through these long days in which he lay in silence and darkness, this question haunted Gyneth's mind unceasingly. Was he still so sad at heart she wondered? or had his outward trial been the means of bringing him inward consolation? Was he satisfied, now that he had given such convincing proof of the victory he had won over his natural cowardice? or did he still believe himself to have failed, and imagine that the accident was in some way his own fault? At any rate it must comfort him, Gyneth thought, to see how devotedly his father loved him, he would never again be able to suppose that Colonel Deshon was only "resigned to him," he must at last have found out that he was the best-beloved, the most highly-esteemed of all the seven children.

But then again arose the question, would this discovery be as delightful to him as it would have been to her? She called to mind his humility and unselfishness, his shrinking from all praise and preference, and thought not.

On the Friday before Christmas Day, as she was putting on her bonnet to go to morning church, her father tapped at her door, and said, "I want you to speak to Mr. Weatherhead after service, my dear, and ask him to be kind enough to call this afternoon, if he can do so conveniently. Dr. Randolph thinks Lambert so far better that he no longer objects to his seeing one or two people, and being read to, and talked to, a little, so long as he is not excited, and I think he would rather see Mr. Weatherhead than anybody."

"Oh yes! I understand," said Gyneth quickly, "but may he not see Jeannie, papa? she does long so for it."

"Yes, but Randolph is afraid that the meeting might be too agitating, so I fear it must still be deferred for a little while. We must have patience, and not attempt too much at once, this advance is almost more than we could have hoped."

Gyneth, Jeannie, and Edgar walked to church together,—Alfred and Lawrence dispensed with week-day church-goings, as being an unnecessary though innocent practice,—and at the door they met Miss Boyd and Alex. He came forward and inquired after Lambert with frank unaffected interest, and to Gyneth's great joy introduced his sister, who said a few kind words expressive of pleasure at the improved report which Gyneth was able to give of her brother's state. Very few they were, and very simply expressed, but to Gyneth those sweet eyes and that smile told more than a hundred speeches; she felt that Miss Boyd was

one of those rare people whose sympathy must be always welcome whether in sorrow or in joy.

Mr. Weatherhead showed equal pleasure in hearing that Lambert was better, and readily promised to pay him a visit that afternoon; he had called once or twice already to inquire for him, and had seen Colonel Deshon and Gyneth, but had not been admitted into the sick room.

"I suppose you will scarcely care to come to our little school-festival next Wednesday, Miss Deshon," he said as he turned and walked part of the way homewards with the sisters; "and yet, if your brother should continue better, I hope you will come; I think you would enjoy seeing the children's merrymaking, and my little Augusta will be very glad of your help."

Gyneth secretly thought Mr. Weatherhead somewhat mistaken in this last supposition, but she gladly accepted the invitation to the feast, more particularly as he extended it to her sisters, two of whom at least—the eldest and youngest—would, she knew, take real pleasure in such a festival. Jeannie showed her interest in the subject very prettily, asked the number of children and so forth, and left a very fascinating impression on the good rector, who described her to his daughter at dinner that day as "the prettiest creature imaginable, far more engaging than Miss Deshon, though perhaps with a little of the same languid manner." And yet he was beginning to feel a certain liking for "Miss Deshon" beyond the general interest which he took in all the members of his flock; he had not thought much about her until now, when sympathy with the trial that had fallen on them brought the Deshon family before his mind, and he found himself reflecting on what he knew of their different characters, and regretting that the business of his large parish, and the many cares

pressing on him prevented his acquiring much individual knowledge of the upper-class of his parishioners. From having had Lambert as a school-teacher, and so on, he knew more of him than of the others, and liked very much what he did know ; he had overheard occasionally some of his instructions to his Sunday-scholars, and had thought them quite above the average, both in knowledge and feeling ; "he is a little too nervous, but otherwise I could not wish for a better teacher," he had often remarked to his daughter. And now it occurred to him that perhaps Gyneth shared her brother's aptitude for teaching, and a wish even crossed his mind that he had her as a teacher for his third class of girls instead of a certain self-sufficient Miss Green, who thought it necessary to give her scholars some sort of explanation of every passage in Scripture which they happened to read to her, no matter how mysterious or difficult, and who vibrated between anger and tears whenever a favourite scholar was taken from her class to be promoted to a higher one. Yet the Miss Greens, and others who afflict the minds of their clerical superintendents, cannot and ought not to be summarily ejected, and so Mr. Weatherhead ended by resolving to have a little more patience with this unsatisfactory teacher, and do his best to improve her, which would be the most effectual way to improve her teaching. And thus Gyneth's hopes of a Sunday-school class were for the present as far from being realized as ever. Yet the general had cast his eye upon her—according to Rose's fanciful metaphor—and conceived the idea of enlisting her in his army of workers, and this in itself was a step towards the accomplishment of her desires. Of course she did not know this, for she could not guess what was passing in the rector's mind, and attributed the increased kindness of his manner

entirely to the sympathy with the distress which Lambert's accident had caused her. Nor would her shyness let her seem as grateful for this sympathy as she really felt, the only warmth she had courage to show was on the subject of little Geoffrey, who had caught a severe cold early in November, and had been suffering more or less ever since.

"He has been very ill this last week or so," said the poor father, sadly, in answer to her inquiries, "and so unusually restless and excitable; Augusta does her best to keep him amused and tranquil, but it is difficult, and I am afraid the constant effort and anxiety are wearing her out, poor child."

Gyneth named some ingenious toy which she had lately heard of as having been invented for the amusement of the blind, and asked whether Geoffrey had one, and upon Mr. Weatherhead's answering in the negative, revolved in her own mind the possibility of commissioning her cousin Lewis to procure one for her in London. She decided that there could be no harm in doing so, Lewis was so kind, he never minded trouble where the pleasure of any suffering child was concerned, and accordingly when she reached home, she proceeded forthwith to write her request to him, first announcing her intentions to her mother, moved thereto by a feeling which made her dislike even the appearance of concealment in anything that concerned, however slightly, her intercourse with Mr. Grantham.

"Going to ask Lewis to get one for you, are you, my dear?" said Mrs. Deshon, as Gyneth described to her the kind of toy she meant; "it is a pity you did not think of it before, for I wrote to him myself this morning to tell him that Bertie was better, and could have put in a message for

you if I had known in time; unfortunately I have sent off my letter."

Gyneth did not see the force of the calamity, but was pleased with her mother's kind thought in sending Lewis the earliest news of Lambert's amendment.

"I daresay," Mrs. Deshon went on, "if we had not had illness in the house, papa would have liked to have asked your cousin to spend Christmas Day with us, but as it is, we cannot of course wish for any other guest than dear grandmamma; except Anthony, poor fellow, I was forgetting him; but we must have him, as he is not going to his mother's, and as it will be Sunday too, he will like to spend the day quietly with us."

Gyneth assented, not however without some pitying thoughts of the lonely Christmas day to which Mr. Grantham was thus doomed, until she remembered that he would probably spend it with the Burnabys. "How stupid of me not to think of that before!" meditated she; "I dare say he will be rather sad in thinking of Bertie, but Rose will cheer him, and they will go together to the cathedral, and hear one of the beautiful Christmas anthems, 'There were shepherds,' perhaps, how well I remember that last year!"

Her note to her cousin contained scarcely anything but a request that he would procure the toy for her, and this was worded humbly and almost apologetically, but it brought about a very unexpected result. In the twilight of Christmas Eve, when Gyneth was enjoying a few minutes' tête-à-tête with her grandmamma, who had arrived about an hour before,—accompanied by the two little girls, and escorted by Colonel Deshon who had insisted on her allowing him to have the pleasure of fetching her,—it was interrupted by her mother, who putting in her head at the bedroom door,

announced, "There is a guest downstairs who is anxiously waiting to see you both; the toy was too precious to be trusted to the care of railway officials, so Lewis has brought it himself! Are you ready to descend, dear Granny? It is quite pleasant to see that you are not knocked up by your railway journey." "Edgar took too good care of me for that," said the gentle old lady; "I will be down directly to see dear Lewis, I am only waiting for my little shawl which my child here is hunting for." Gyneth was on her knees turning over the contents of one of her grandmamma's trunks, and her mother coming forward as if to help her, contrived to say, *sotto voce*, "Do you think your cousin has come with the intention of staying over to-morrow? If so, I may as well make a virtue of necessity and ask him to stay, he can have the room that I had meant for my dear Jeannie."

"I don't think you need be afraid, mamma, Lewis is not the sort of person to invite himself anywhere, and probably he is going to spend to-morrow with the Burnabys," answered Gyneth in the same tone, trying not to feel insulted on her cousin's account, though she was more sensitive in what concerned him than herself. And most assuredly she was right so far as that he had no intention of paying more than a flying visit, though it was *not* because he was going to spend the next day with the Burnabys. "No," he said, in answer to granny's inquiries on this head, "no, they kindly invited me, and so did Mr. Willis, but I had already promised to spend Christmas Day with my friend Mainwaring at his house in the Isle of Wight, this is the first Christmas since his wife's death, and he is almost as destitute of near relations as I am, so he clings to his few old friends, of whom I am I believe the oldest."

"And you came out of the way to bring this toy —this wet evening too! I am so much obliged to you, Cousin Lewis," said Gyneth, "it is exactly what I wanted, and how quickly you have got it; I dare say little Geoffrey will like it all the better for being a Christmas-box."

"So I thought, and I wanted to hear the last news of Bertie; you would be afraid to let me see him, I suppose, Edgar?"

"Yes, I should be afraid to venture it without Randolph's authority; he has promised to call this evening, but I suppose you can't spare time to wait till he arrives?" answered Colonel Deshon. "You must come and spend New Year's day with us; I hope my poor boy may be better by that time, and in any case *you* will be welcome, will he not, Fanny?"

If her husband had expressed a wish to have the Nana Sahib to celebrate the New Year with him, Mrs. Deshon would probably have acquiesced, and to welcome Mr. Grantham at his bidding was so easy a task that she threw into it an amount of cordiality which quite surprised her daughter.

There could be no need for her to say anything as her mother had said so much, thought Gyneth to herself, and accordingly she was silent, though Jeannie lifted her pretty eyes with a beseeching "Yes, do come, Cousin Lewis, we have seen nothing of you for this age past;" and Alfred followed it up with a hearty "Yes, don't disappoint us, Grantham, Jeannie and I shall be off to the North when the weather's milder, I have thoughts of becoming a resident landlord, which will cut us off from our friends a good deal, so we must make the most of them now."

To sit there silent among the hum of voices, and only catch an occasional quick look from her cousin, as he turned from one to the other, was

not the way to make the most of the pleasure of this unexpected glimpse of him; but Gyneth shrank from in any way seeming to appropriate his visit to herself, and rather liked to see how his attention was claimed on all sides, and how even her mother grew sincerely and not artificially cordial under the influence of the warm unaffected sympathy with which he heard the details of Lambert's accident and illness. But to Lewis, who was not much accustomed to see her in any other company than that of the dear Granny, and who had had more experience of her powers of conversation than of her "grand talent pour le silence," this mute quiet behaviour appeared cold and strange. He was used indeed to her dreamy moods, but she did not look dreamy now; she sat full in the lamp-light which shone brightly on her glossy hair, her small, erect head, and fair white throat, (the reproach of 'hunching up her shoulders' could no longer be addressed to her,) and showed her face grave indeed but intelligent, attentive, listening, evidently quite cognizant of all that was passing around her.

Dinner-time was drawing near, and instead of accepting Colonel Deshon's invitation to stay and dine with them, Mr. Grantham rose to go, saying he feared to miss the steamer.

"Then we shall see you on New Year's Day," said the elder Mrs. Deshon, wistfully, as if even when with her real son she scarcely liked to part with this adopted one, who hitherto had always kept his Christmas with her.

"Yes, I hope so, dear Granny," he answered, kissing her; "and meantime I like to know that you and Gyneth are together again; 'it seems so natural like,' as that worthy domestic of yours, Eliza, would say, to see you side by side."

He glanced from the old to the young lady as

he spoke, and that grave look of Gyneth's dissolved in the sweetest sunshine. "I am quite rich, having both Grandmamma and Jeannie; am I not, Lewis?" she said brightly. "If only Bertie were better!" and then the grave expression returned.

If only! that was all she wanted then, he felt this not bitterly, but somewhat sadly, though suffering no selfish regret to appear, as holding out his hand he said, "You know what sort of Christmas I wish you; not the conventional merry one of course, but something better, and the very happiest of new years. You will let me hear how Bertie goes on. Good-bye for the present."





CHAPTER XXVII.

“ A little longer yet—a little longer
Shall starry night be beautiful for thee ;
And the cold moon shall look through the blue silence,
Flooding her silver path upon the sea.

“ A little longer yet—a little longer
Life shall be thine ; life with its power to will ;
Life with its strength to bear, to love, to conquer,
Bringing its thousand joys thy heart to fill.”

ADELAIDE PROCTER.



FAINT musical murmur of the distant Christmas chimes reached poor Lambert in his sick room that night ; and when Gyneth was sitting with him the next morning, a sound of singing stole up to them, which made him exclaim, “ That is Jeannie’s voice ! Will you please open the door, Gyneth, then we shall hear better.”

She gladly did so, feeling sure that the soft melody of the Christmas carol would soothe rather than injure him ; and as the drawing-room door was open too, they could distinctly hear the quaint old words :

“ And all the bells on earth did ring,
On earth did ring,
On earth did ring,
And all the bells on earth did ring
On Christmas-Day in the morning.

“And all the Angels in Heaven did sing,
In Heaven did sing,
In Heaven did sing,
And all the Angels in Heaven did sing,
On Christmas-Day in the morning.”—

“I know that carol of old,” said Lambert, with a little sigh of pleasure; “and Jeannie’s voice has not lost any of its sweetness. Do you think they will let me see her again to-day?”

He had been allowed a short visit from her the day before, and Gyneth standing by and seeing the loving warmth of Jeannie’s caresses, and the answering tenderness they called forth, had regretted her own shyness and coldness towards him. He was too weak now to be able to maintain that stern control over all his emotions, which had made it so difficult to find out how to give him pleasure, or spare him pain; and though he did his utmost to hide his sufferings, and check every feeling of impatience at his weakness and helplessness, he was glad to cheer his anxious nurses by making grateful use of such alleviations as they could procure for him. Somewhat of a “child’s pure delight in little things” was manifest in him now that he would let his natural likings have their way, instead of crushing them all under the iron rule of uncompromising self-denial. It was not that he in the least relapsed into self-indulgence, only that the outward trial laid on him was so heavy as to make voluntary self-chastening seem less necessary. His nights were sleepless enough now without self-imposed vigils; the long days spent in artificial twilight and enforced idleness gave such ample time for serious thought and prayer, that there was no need to fear the distraction of the few brighter moments in which a visit from one of his sisters or brothers, the gift of some beautiful hot-house flowers, (sent by Mr. Arm-

strong,) or the distant echo of one of Jeannie's sweet songs, made a passing break in his monotonous life. Pain and discomfort he had in abundance, and at his age—nearly one-and-twenty—there was something peculiarly distressing and humiliating in the utter inability to help himself, which his weakness and the maimed condition of his right hand occasioned. The old nurse treated him as if he were a child again, called him "My dear," and domineered over him affectionately. Even his mother sometimes forgot that he was a man; his father was the only one of his attendants who thoroughly sympathised in *this* part of his trial, and with delicate tact contrived to remind him of his helplessness as little as possible, and to defer whenever feasible to his own judgment and will, instead of over-ruling them with well-meaning arbitrariness.

For several days Lambert had lain under the shadow of death, and though for him that gloom was spanned by the rainbow of hope in those covenanted mercies in which he had placed his trust, there was a great awe in being brought so near to the unseen world. His complaint was one which, unlike many others, does not overcloud the mind, but leaves it calm and self-possessed, spite of physical sufferings; so he knew his own danger, and through the long silent hours this timid sorrowful soul weighed with perfect clearness its prospects in that futurity which seemed so near. If Mr. Parry's estimate of Lambert's religion had been true, those hours would have been hours of despair. But they were not so; for Lambert could say with an old author, "It is not that I trust in mine own faith, but in Thy faithfulness; not in mine own repentance, but in Thy pardon; not in mine own preparation, but in Thy acceptance; in Thee, in Thy merits, and in Thy mercies do I

trust ;" and so if death had indeed come then, he could have met it bravely and trustingly. But it did not come; he was not to be of those 'early called to rest,' but of those who are reserved to do battle in the world as Christian knights errant, the 'champions vowed of truth and purity,' to whom it is given to bear the burden and heat of the day, and to struggle on in faith and patience, till—

" When the shadows thickest fall,
They hear their master's midnight call."

The dangerous symptoms which had given so much cause for alarm gradually lessened instead of increasing as the doctors had feared they would, and after a long visit paid late on Christmas Eve, Dr. Randolph pronounced him out of danger, though at the same time predicting that his convalescence would be slow and tedious, as it would be long ere his muscles recovered the strain of the spasmodic disease he had been suffering from, and still longer perhaps before his delicate constitution rallied from the weakness engendered by suffering, and by the semi-starvation to which his inability to swallow had reduced him.

There was, therefore, room for anxiety respecting him still, but it was much indeed to all those who loved him to be relieved from that great dread which had weighed so heavily on their hearts for the fortnight which had passed since the accident, the dread, namely, that his illness would have a speedy and fatal termination. To no one could the relief be so intense as to Colonel Deshon, and though to none but his wife did he express a particle of his feelings on the subject, his children could well divine what they were, and perfectly understood why he left it to Mrs. Deshon to announce the good news, and why many hours

of that night were passed by him alone in the library.

He came down to breakfast the next morning, looking so ill that church-going was manifestly out of the question for him; the anxiety and watchfulness of the preceding fortnight had told on him seriously,—strong man as he was,—and he had so resigned himself to expect the worst that the re-awakening of hope agitated and unnerved him more than his past fears had done.

The Eucharistic feast was to be celebrated that morning in his son's sick chamber, and most thankfully could he take part in this service, though it was a disappointment both to him and to his mother not to be able to share together in the public services of the Church as they had looked forward to doing on this day. Alfred's strong arm was the grandmamma's support as she walked to church that Christmas morning, but all her gentle and kindly courtesy could scarcely hide her regret that the arm she leant on was not her son's.

Jeannie's Christmas carol was but just ended when Mr. Weatherhead arrived, and Lawrence came up to ask if Lambert were ready to see him. Gyneth went close to the bed to arrange Lambert's pillows for him, and as she bent over him whispered, "We cannot keep our feast together to-day, Bertie, but I shall not forget you when I am in church; it will not be wrong, will it, if in the great Thanksgiving I mingle some of the thanks I feel for having you spared to me?"

His answer was to put out a feeble hand and pull her face down to him for a kiss.

Her father had told her that he felt sure Lambert had believed himself to be dying; and now with a wistful desire to know whether the recall to life had been welcome to him or not, she said as

their lips met, and a hot tear fell from her eyes on his cheek, "Bertie, you are not sorry at what has made us all so glad? Life does not seem a burden to you, does it?"

"Surely not on *this* day, on which our LORD took up the burden for our sakes," he answered reverently; "it seems rather a great trust given back to me."

"Yes, I see, those thirty-three years of His on earth make human life sacred," she said reflectively: "thank you, for giving me that as a Christmas thought."

She went away to join her grandmamma, who had been sitting with Colonel Deshon in the library, and Lawrence was following her, but meeting his mother in the passage paused, and said in confused and even timid tones, "Mamma, do you think Mr. Weatherhead would have any objection to my staying in the room? I don't mean of course,—I am not confirmed, you know,—but if I might be present?"

The request surprised her as coming from him, but she was very glad to accede to it, being sure that Mr. Weatherhead would not object; and so while she and her husband drew near to the white-covered table placed beside the bed, Lawrence knelt in a far corner of the room from whence he could see what it seemed his eyes loved to rest on that day,—his brother's pale sweet face. When the service was over, and the Rector gone, Lambert raised his head, and said softly, "Lawrence, come here."

Lawrence came, and the blue eyes were turned up to him with a grave tender earnestness of expression which somehow went straight to his heart. They seemed mutely to convey something of that message which S. Andrew brought when he went out from the presence of CHRIST to find 'his own brother Simon.' The words in their German ver-

sion,—more familiar to him than the English,—occurred to Lawrence's mind, "Wir haben den Messias gefunden;" he felt at this moment that the faith which Lambert rested on was the greatest deepest reality of the world, his own scepticism unreal and delusive. And it so happened that just then Jeannie returned to the piano, and up swelled the beautiful cadence of the well-known hymn, 'Adeste fideles,' "Venite adoremus, venite adoremus, venite adoremus in Bethlehem." Oh, for a pure heart to worship meetly with the shepherds beside that manger-cradle!

The poor boy found no words to express his thoughts,—perhaps it was all the better that they should ripen in silence,—but he stooped down, kissed his brother on both cheeks in warm foreign fashion, and murmuring something about its being nearly time to get ready for church, ran away to his own room.

It was no deep-rooted intellectual doubt which had made Lawrence inclined to rationalistic opinions, but rather that he had been glad of an excuse for not thoroughly accepting a faith which it would have given him so much trouble to act up to. It was practical unbelief, sheltering itself under the garb of theoretical objections, which had he *wished* to be convinced, could have been put to flight at once by a perusal of the works of those Christian authors by whom these objections have been triumphantly refuted. He had an inward consciousness of this; but what was wanted was something which should make him desire to believe, and the events of the last fortnight had in part supplied this. His epicurean philosophy failed to minister comfort to him during those days of anxiety, and made him dread the sorrow which seemed likely to fall on him; he had a real affection for his eldest brother, spite of some im-

patience at what he had been wont to call his 'narrow views,' and when the possibility of Lambert's death occurred to him, he found, to his own surprise, that the thought that Lambert had 'kept the faith,' and lived a pure noble Christian life, was the one which brought the most comfort to him, and made him feel that the death which would bring such sadness to them would be 'gain' to the departing soul. He had piqued himself on being 'éclairé,' and behold at the first touch of sorrow the light surface of acquired scepticism crumbled away, and the solid under-strata of Christian convictions acquired in early childhood remained firm. And though perhaps he still thought Lambert a little prejudiced, a little *borné*, a reverence sprang up in his heart for him such as some weeks before he would have laughed at supposing could be inspired by 'the good elder brother,' whose strictness of principle he had been wont to satirize. As those pure eyes rested on him that Christmas morning, he could not help wishing that he too had been loyal in faith and holy in life, and feeling the stirring of a new desire to become so for the future; the idea which seems but too common among English boys that religious purity and goodness are not *manly*, not meant to be the glory of Christian men as well as of women and children and the aged, had never occurred to him, so he had not *this* mistake to contend against in himself; his foe was indolence and a false shame which made him dislike to own in deed or word that he had been wrong hitherto. His feelings were touched, but it remained to be seen whether they would 'condense within his soul and change to purpose strong,' or whether they would prove evanescent; alas, for the indolence which held him back from the activity which should follow *immediately* upon conviction!

In a few days he was to go through another examination for admission to Woolwich Academy ; if he succeeded, he thought to himself, that he would then find courage to tell his father of his German debt, and the betting with young Mr. Morehurst ; meantime he satisfied himself with this resolve : what would be the use of tormenting the Herr papa about his concerns at a time when he was so taken up with Lambert ?

When Gyneth came out of church that morning she was joined by Augusta Weatherhead, who had hastened after her to express profuse thanks for the toy which little Geoffrey had received the evening before. Miss Gussie's condescension and fluency greatly amused Mr. Hutchinson and Anthony, but Gyneth perceived with distress an unusual excitement in her manner and a flushed feverish expression in her face. "It is sad to see so young a face with that anxious worried look," said Mrs. Deshon, when Augusta had taken leave of them, "and I don't like the sound of that short nervous cough ; I'm afraid the poor child is over-tasked."

"I don't know that she has actually too much to do ; but I'm afraid she has too much responsibility, grandmamma," began Gyneth, when Alfred interrupted her laughingly. "I should think it was greatly self-imposed. 'The partridge sleeps with his feet uppermost for fear the sky should fall,' and Miss Weatherhead seems to think the world would come to a stand-still if she were not constantly looking after it."

"I don't know about that," said Gyneth, "but indeed she has a real care in the charge of all her little brothers and sisters, and she is so anxious to help her father, and spare him trouble. You can't think how useful she is."

"It is very generous of you to stand up for her,

darling, for she patronizes you most mercilessly," said Jeannie in her sweet tones.

"Yes; I wonder you don't,—aw—set her down, extinguish her a little," drawled Anthony; "it's such a bore to be civil to people when one is secretly longing to say to them, 'You're positively insufferable, and I wish you would go away.'"

"But I never did long to say that to Augusta," said Gyneth, smiling, and wishing she could change the subject. "Are you sure?" inquired Alfred incredulously. "I suspect if one could reach your real opinion of her it would be something akin to 'conceited little wretch!'"

"No, no, indeed," replied Gyneth, pained; and as her grandmother pressed her hand, and said half-playfully to the others, "I must not have you try to make my child uncharitable," she felt that there was at least one person who understood her.

The conversation wandered to other subjects, but was not very congenial to the feelings of either Mrs. Deshon or Gyneth. "One is scarcely ready for that kind of talk after having been permitted to join in the services of such a day as this," said the former, when they were again alone together; "I saw it vexed you, my dear child."

"I was sorry they should be so hard upon Augusta; but, indeed, I dare say they did not mean it; they were speaking half in jest," said Gyneth, "only it did pain me at the moment, coming just after we had been kneeling together with her at the Feast which should make us all *one*."

"Ah! if we kept our Communions more in mind we could never surely be so uncharitable as we are towards those who meet us there; could we, my dearest?" said the old lady, thoughtfully smoothing away the silken hair from the fair forehead that was resting on her shoulder, "but very likely, as you say, those remarks on your little

friend were not meant to be taken seriously; young men have a careless way of talking sometimes, which jars on those who, like you and me, have been accustomed to something different, and makes me feel what a treasure I have in my Lewis, who is one of a thousand."

"Yes; I wonder sometimes if I shall ever meet with any one like him," mused Gyneth; "most people strike me as being so utterly different, and yet mamma says he is 'quite a man of the world,' and Lady Eynesford said something the same of him; it is very funny."

"I suppose they mean that he knows the ways of the world, and enjoys society, and is a clever man of business, but you and I can testify that he is something much more than a *mere* man of the world; can we not?"

"Yes, but do you know, grandmamma, I am almost sorry it can be said of him in *any* sense, I should like him to seem as far, far above the world as he really is."

"Above what is bad in the world? I think he does seem that already, my love, and surely that is in itself a great deal. I confess I should be sorry if there were any needless singularity about him, for it would lessen his usefulness; it always seems to me that he is one of those people whose duty lies in the world, and who know how to take the right part in it, helping to keep up all that is good in it, and holding steadily and quietly aloof from whatever is bad." Gyneth looked doubtful, and Mrs. Deshon added with a smile, "You don't quite agree with me, I see, my dear child."

"Indeed I daresay you are right, dear granny," answered Gyneth, "but I have always thought that if I were a man, and free to choose my own path, as Lewis is, I should like to find my mission in something higher than that. Don't you re-

member my discussing it with him one day last spring, and his asking me what would become of society if all right-principled people thought themselves justified in withdrawing from it, and then how angry he was, or pretended to be, with me, for answering that I didn't much care what became of it, and shouldn't mind if there were no such thing?"

"Ah, you are a silly pussy sometimes, and you know it," said the old lady fondly; "Lewis is right in saying that it is the young people now who have the decided opinions, and are for setting all the world to rights; but tell me, what do papa and mamma say to these notions of yours?"

"They never heard them," said Gyneth, blushing and hanging down her head, "it is only you and Lewis to whom I can prate out all my crude ideas, except that now and then I give poor Bertie a little dose of them. Dear granny, though I am so silly and self-opinionated, I am not quite bad enough to let my notions come in the way of papa's and mamma's wishes; and I really don't hate parties so much as I used, nor feel quite so stupid and gauche when I have to talk to strangers."

"Lewis noticed that you had improved in manner, he said you were less—oh what was it?—one of his French words,—less 'farouche,' towards strangers, yes, that was it; and my love, I am glad of it, for a kind pleasant manner wins people to be at ease with us, and opens the way for our being of service to them; people seldom go for help to a very cold distant-mannered person, and though you are too young yet to be asked for advice or important assistance, your sympathy may be needed, and you should be ready to give it."

"But, grandmamma, it does not seem as yet as if I could be of service to anyone, except just in my home, I scarcely knew that I could be of use

there till this illness of Bertie's showed me that I could."

"And now mamma says you are her best help; and as you grow older more duties will open out for you. I am sure you, my dear one, will not make the mistake—which I am told some young ladies make—of supposing that charity can only be exercised in teaching ragged children and visiting poor people; you will find out how many offices of love may be fulfilled in one's intercourse with one's own class, and how there are sorrows and wants, and cares even among those whom we meet with in general *society*"—this last word emphasized with a look of playful meaning,—“which are quite as real as those in humbler life, and in their measure are an equal call on us for sympathy.”

“Yes, I will try to think of that,” said Gyneth, thoughtfully, “I’m afraid I am more like the mistaken young ladies you spoke of, than you know, grandmamma. And I must tell you one thing which has made me so sorry, and which illustrates what you said just now about manner. There is a Miss Fanshawe, a sort of old-young lady, whom we meet at parties here, and who is not very popular, because she dresses rather unsuitably, and is supposed to be fond of gossip, but whom one must pity when one knows her story, for she has lost her parents and all her brothers and sisters—there were five of them, I think—and has scarcely a relation in the world, so that she must be very very lonely. I did not know this till lately, and I did not fancy her much, so when she used to try to talk to me, as she did rather often, generally asking me an endless string of questions, I answered in the old monosyllabic fashion, which always comes most naturally to me when I am talking to people I don’t know well. And then one evening, at Government House—for Miss Fanshawe is rich,

and is asked out everywhere—mamma accidentally overheard her telling somebody that she had got a letter from her brother-in-law, almost the only near connexion she has, and that being a German, he had written in that language and the German writing-character, which she could not read; she said it was the first time he had written to her since his wife's death, and that she hoped it contained some particulars of the illness of this sister who died nearly a year ago, but that she did not know whom to ask to read it to her, and when the lady she was speaking to suggested she might ask me, she answered, ‘Well, I'm told Miss Deshon is very accomplished, and a particularly good German scholar, but I must say, I don't like those cold silent young ladies, who think themselves too clever to talk on any ordinary subject, and I should be sorry to be obliged to ask this favour of *her*.’”

“If she had been more discerning she might have seen that the cold manner was much more shyness than pride,” said Mrs. Deshon, who could not help somewhat resenting Miss Fanshawe’s strictures on her gentle little granddaughter; “but, poor thing, it must have been very painful for her to be obliged to ask any mere acquaintance to read *that* letter.”

“Yes, but do you know, dear grandmamma, I did read it after all, for mamma told me what Miss Fanshawe had said, and took me to see her the next day, and though I was too much abashed to say much, mamma made herself so pleasant and spoke so kindly, that Miss Fanshawe began to speak of her losses, and mentioned the letter, and then mamma persuaded her to bring it out and let me read it to her. It was written in such a dreadfully unintelligible hand that I could not help blundering over it, but she was very kind and pa-

tient, and afterwards I wrote down a translation of it for her to keep."

"And I hope her prejudice against clever young ladies has diminished since then! It was a good lesson for you though, my dear one."

"Yes, indeed, for if mamma had not happened to overhear Miss Fanshawe's conversation I should have quite lost the opportunity of doing her this little service, through my stupid manner and selfish dislike to exerting myself. Mamma said she did not wonder at all at what Miss Fanshawe said of me, for that I could have no idea how stately I looked, and how languid and distant my manner was."

"And so mamma has set herself to drive away the languor, and make quite a well-mannered young lady of you?" said Mrs. Deshon, smiling and kissing her, and Gyneth answered playfully, "I must try to do credit to her efforts, mustn't I?" not thinking it necessary to add how much she had suffered under her mother's satirical censures on her behaviour, and how difficult she sometimes found it to be anything but hopelessly stiff and stupid, when conscious that what she did and said was observed, and might be commented on afterwards. Lewis need not have been afraid that her mother's influence would have a bad effect on Gyneth, the training which would have made a less sincere and simple-minded girl artificial, had with her quite a contrary result; when told to *seem* anything she set herself to *be* it, and had found a way to reconcile perfect truth and honesty with perfect docility and obedience. But this constant effort was somewhat painful, and to her balls and dinner-parties were by no means the scenes of "bewildering enchantment," "dangerous attraction," and "thoughtless festivity," which the writers of a certain class of good books delight to represent them,

but rather occasions on which she must be particularly on her guard ; must exert herself to talk ; must dance with people she didn't like, and try not to hurt their feelings by showing that she didn't ; must play whenever she was asked, no matter how large the audience was, or how frightened she felt ; must hold herself upright, and not dream or fall into abstraction ; and must bear to be told afterwards when she had failed in any of these respects. All this had seemed rather hard at first, but now practice was making it easier, and she was learning by slow degrees to enjoy all that was good and pleasant in society, and not to be quite so ready to wish that there were no such thing. "She will suit Lewis much better than if she were quite an obstinate little recluse," thought the grandmamma to herself, then some painful remembrance dashed aside this comfortable thought, and with a half sigh she added, "Well, she will be a treasure to whoever has her, and I'm sure she will never marry any man whom she cannot esteem. Only I do hope it won't be that little Mr. Waller of whom Fanny is so fond!"



CHAPTER XXVIII.

“Bear with me, I am sick.”

Love's Labour Lost.

BEFORE the dawn of the new year Lambert became so much better that there was no further cause for any serious anxiety about him, and the spirits of all his home-circle rose proportionably. Many happy hours did Gyneth spend in reading and talking to him, and well might his mother say that he was an exception to the general rule of men being more tiresome and difficult to nurse than women, for no woman could have been more patient or more easily satisfied than he was. He seemed to have prayed with Fuller, “Teach me the art of patience whilst I am well, and give me the use of it when I am sick,” for nothing sufficed to draw forth a murmur from him, and his sweet placidity was never clouded save by an occasional fit of mute uncomplaining sadness which often passed unobserved, or was attributed to physical weakness. He was able now to enjoy the society of his grandmother and Jeannie, and though Alfred with his heavy tread and rather loud voice was not quite so welcome a visitor, Lambert never refused to see him, and the brothers-in-law were very good friends, utterly unlike as they were to

each other. As for poor little Edgar, he had found his place by Bertie's side again, and was almost happy, he would have been quite, if the sight of the bandaged hand had not constantly recalled to him his share in the accident. Lambert seemed to look forward with so much pleasure to Mr. Grantham's arrival on New Year's Eve, that his mother became perfectly reconciled to the idea of receiving this to her personally unwelcome guest, and made her preparations for him with so good a grace, that there was nothing to damp Gyneth's gratification at the thought of "a whole long day with Cousin Lewis." And to her that "long day" was *very* long, but it was *not* passed with Cousin Lewis.

She and her sisters went to the rector's school-feast which took place on the afternoon of the Innocents' Day, and much did they admire the good management with which Augusta Weatherhead supplied the wants of the small hosts of school children, and provided for the comfort of the lookers-on, though there was something rather ludicrous in the additional air of importance which she assumed for the occasion, and in her evident disdain of all the advice and assistance which some of the guests good-naturedly proffered her.

The short dry cough on which Mrs. Deshon had remarked, was often heard as she moved to and fro, and awakened Gyneth's anxiety, though she made light of it herself, saying carelessly, "I caught a cold a week ago, and have not had time to nurse it, that is all; papa wanted to send for a doctor yesterday, but I wouldn't let him. I know he would have told me to stay at home and nurse myself, and then papa would have had all the trouble of the feast on his shoulders. I consider it weak-minded to lay up for a cold, they pass off somehow if one pays no attention to them."

But in this case the cold was disobliging, and did not pass off. On the last day of the old year when Gyneth and Lawrence were taking an afternoon walk accompanied by Alex Boyd, they met Mr. Weatherhead, who stopped them, and asked Alex if he thought his sister were at home. "I wanted to ask her if she could spare time to come round by our house as she goes to church this evening, and pay Gussie a visit; perhaps you could take the message for me, for I shall be glad to return to my poor little girl, I'm afraid she is quite ill, though she won't admit it."

"Has she consented to be doctored yet?" said Alex. "Mary thought her looking ill on Wednesday, and tried to persuade her to take to bed and unlimited barley-water."

"There was a kind of tisane I used to have administered to me when I was in France that was capital for a cold——" began Lawrence, but Mr. Weatherhead interrupted,

"Yes, those sort of things often cure a cold if they are taken in time, but I'm afraid such a simple remedy would scarcely avail now, even if Augusta would try it. Perhaps I'm over anxious, but at all events I shall be glad to have Mary's advice about her; you won't forget my message, Alex?"

"No, sir; I'm going home now, and will deliver it at once. Tell Gussie if she doesn't take to bed forthwith, she must be prepared to receive an awful rowing from Mary, who is a perfect dragon when her prescriptions are slighted."

The rector smiled, and wishing the young people good-bye, turned homewards.

"A person had need to be a dragon, and show their teeth a little, to make Augusta mind," said Alex turning to Gyneth, "I never saw any one so determined as she is; she gave the children's nurse

a holiday this week, against her father's advice, and there she is now, too ill to know what to do with herself, and with the torment of all those little ones on her hands from morning till night. She'll never be content till she's worried herself to shreds."

"But how very self-denying she must be," said Gyneth, almost admiringly.

"She forgets to deny her self-will," returned Alexander, with the broad good-natured smile which seemed to take off the edge of his sharp speeches. "Miss Deshon, I see you think me horribly uncharitable, but Gussie is a particular friend of mine, and so I take the liberty of abusing her. We knew the Weatherheads long before they came here, and on the strength of this old acquaintance I am impudent enough to speak my mind both to and of the lofty Augusta, who awes ordinary mortals into mute respect. We are at daggers drawn now, because she wouldn't let me take the children a walk yesterday when I wanted to ; I told her it was selfish of her to keep them mewed up in a hot room with her when there was some one willing to take them out ; but she said when I took them out I let them romp and behave ill, and she 'didn't choose that people should see the *rector's* children setting an example of rude behaviour ;' poor little brats ! as if they weren't twice as pleasant and natural when delivered from her superintendence."

"And surely it would be a relief to her to be quiet for a little while ; I wonder if she would trust the children to me ?" said Gyneth, "I am not at all tired, are you, Lawrie ? there would be plenty of time to take them a walk on the beach, for it is quite early still. Do let us run after Mr. Weatherhead and ask him if we may, he is still in sight, for he has been stopped by some poor person."

"I shall think you very clever if you manage it, Miss Deshon," laughed Alexander; "I suspect poor Gussie will consider you much too indulgent to be trusted with those riotous little mortals however, Mr. Weatherhead may back you up, and it will be a real kindness on your part."

They separated; Alex Boyd going home, while Gyneth and Lawrence turned in pursuit of the rector who was a good way ahead. He strode along so rapidly that Lawrie soon declared the chase hopeless, but Gyneth with a playful "Lazy Lawrence!" changed her quick walk into almost a run, and being on the common, with no one near, flew along regardless of appearances, and arrived breathless and panting at Mr. Weatherhead's side. He was somewhat startled by the apparition of this eager smiling face, with its unwonted glow of colour, and hardly recognised it as the same countenance which he had seen looking so pale and still a few minutes before.

"I beg your pardon," faltered Gyneth, as soon as she had breath to speak, "I am afraid I have startled you, but I wanted to ask you if you would let your children take a walk with me presently, I should like it so very much, if you would not mind."

The Rector demurred a little, saying, the children would perhaps be troublesome, but as despite his objections he seemed rather pleased, Gyneth ventured to press her request, and very soon obtained his assent.

"It is unfortunate that my poor Gussie should be ill during the Christmas holidays and while our nurse is away too," he observed, as they walked on together; "the care of so many little ones is no joke, and I am not able to relieve her much, as my duties keep me away from home great part of the day." No joke, indeed, it seemed, when they

entered the overheated sitting-room, where sat Augusta chilly and miserable, wrapped in a great shawl, and complaining of the cold, (though the hand she extended to Gyneth felt hot and dry,) while Horace and Ellie were grumbling at the heat, and standing near the window were drumming on the panes and wishing themselves out in the snow; and the younger children were gathered in a heap by the side of Geoffrey's couch, squabbling for some spoonfuls of jelly which he was doling out to them from a plate in his lap.

"You haven't given me any, Geoff'y," cried one little voice, reproachfully, as Gyneth entered, and a little hand was put out to guide the spoon to the speaker's mouth, while another voice interposed with "It's your own fault, Mary, you should have gone nearer if you wanted some, you know poor Geoffrey can't see."

"Hush, hush," said Mr. Weatherhead, with a look of pain, not liking that his poor little son should be reminded of his sightlessness. "You may well say 'hush,' papa," said Augusta, sharply, "you can't think what a noise and quarrelling the children do keep up, and Horace is as bad as any of them, though he is old enough to know better; he has wetted through his tunic playing with the snow in the garden, and now he is not content to stay in-doors."

"I would be content if Gussie wouldn't plague so," urged Horace, but this line of self-defence was not likely to avail much with his father, and Gyneth was not surprised when Horace was reprimanded, and told that he must forfeit his holidays if he could not employ them rationally, and without giving annoyance to his sister. "And now," continued Mr. Weatherhead, "Miss Deshon is kind enough to wish to take some of you for a walk, so those who are to go must get ready at once."

Augusta began a remonstrance which was cut short by Gyneth's saying with her most persuasive smile, "Please don't disappoint me, Mr. Weatherhead has promised, and do let me have all who are strong enough for a walk, I shall enjoy it so much more if I may, and my brother is waiting outside for me, and will help me to take care of them."

"Yes, yes, you shall have them all, the whole set of little plagues," said the Rector, smiling, and kissing his youngest little girl; "run away, children, and get ready, and mind you are very good, and give Miss Deshon no trouble, or I shall have to be very angry."

"Papa, it is quite a shame," said Augusta, but she was feeling too ill to have much strength for opposition, and Gyneth at length carried off the whole six in triumph, and had the satisfaction of hearing Mr. Weatherhead say as she was leaving the room, "Now we three will be very cosy together, will we not? I will draw Geoffrey's couch nearer, and then I can go on reading to you both that book you were interested in last night, and meantime you must lean back, Gussie, and take a real rest." Fortunately she did not know that poor Augusta's reply was, "Rest! oh, no, indeed, papa, thank you; Nelly has torn her best frock all across the front, and I must try to mend it in some way, for her to wear at church to-morrow."

Gyneth found her charge an easy one, for the children were all very good, and exceedingly happy, except that at first Horace seemed a little depressed by the reproof he had received from his father, of whom he was passionately fond. "I did not mean to be tiresome to Gussie, you know," he confided to Gyneth as he trotted along beside her while the others ran on in front, "but she would not let me do a single thing, and at last because I jangled the fire-irons she burst out crying, and

then I called her ‘a silly,’ and she was so angry, but it really was silly, now wasn’t it? to cry about such a little thing as that.”

“It would have been if she had been well, but I’m afraid she is feeling very ill and uncomfortable, and when one is ill a very little thing upsets one,” answered Gyneth, feeling a sincere pity for the aching head and excited nerves which must have made the ‘jangling’ of the fire-irons so intolerable as to draw childish tears from the womanly Augusta. After a time Horace quite recovered his spirits and was the merriest of all, and though Lawrence declined to do more than saunter along at as lazy a pace as the cold season would permit, Gyneth entered into the humour of her little companions, and was being initiated by Horace into the art of making snowballs, when raising her head she saw, approaching towards her, Mr. Armstrong, accompanied by an old gentleman and a young lady.

“How fortunate I am to have met you,” said the young officer, radiantly, as she looked up; “let me introduce my father to you, and my sister Angela, of whom, I think, you have heard me speak.”

“If Miss Deshon has not heard of us, we have heard of her,” said the elder Mr. Armstrong, with a courteous bow; and something in his manner, and in the eager, curious, interested glances of Angela’s beautiful blue eyes, made Gyneth feel involuntarily that she was being submitted to inspection, and that they were trying to discover whether she was worthy of being the object of ‘Frank’s’ admiration. Of course she felt somewhat awkward, and imagined herself looking so likewise, though in truth Mr. Armstrong senior was mentally pronouncing her ‘a sensible, amiable-looking girl,’ and Angela, whose style of beauty was rather rustic, was secretly admiring her re-

fined appearance, the clear transparent pallor of her complexion, and the smallness of her hands, which last point she had taken care especially to note, having been told by her governess that small hands were 'aristocratic.'

The younger Mr. Armstrong did not feel the slightest doubt that the lady of his love would be approved by his father and sister; but he was a little uneasy as to the impression which they might make on Gyneth. He looked from one to the other, so proud of all three, so anxious that they should be friends, and yet so fearful that Gyneth was thinking him troublesome, and wishing him and his relatives a thousand miles off, that his frank face was the oddest mixture of delight and embarrassment. Not before the Queen herself would he have blushed to own the respectable old button-maker as his father, nor indeed was there anything to be ashamed of in the quiet intelligent-looking old man, who, though certainly not aristocratic or peculiarly refined, was neither vulgar nor pretentious, and had far too much good sense and right feeling to make an ostentatious display of his great wealth and the influence it had gained for him in society. The pretty Angela was her brother's especial pride and pet; and he announced with great glee that she had come on a visit to Mrs. Parry, who had been kind enough to invite her to stay some weeks; but he glanced doubtfully at Gyneth, to see whether she received the news with any pleasure, and was perhaps somewhat disappointed by her reply.

"That will be very pleasant for you both," she said, and it did not seem to occur to her that she could have any personal interest in the matter.

"Are these all your brothers and sisters?" inquired Miss Armstrong, regarding the numerous small Weatherheads, with some surprise.

"No; this is my brother," said Gyneth, looking towards Lawrence, who had just come up to them; "but these are the children of our Rector."

"Miss Weatherhead is ill, isn't she? The Rector was not at the night school yesterday, and Mr. Mayhew told me that he did not like to leave his daughter," said Mr. Armstrong, junior; "is she at all better to-day, Horace?"

"Oh, no, she's very poorly, and papa'll be obliged to leave her to-night, for he's going to have an evening service 'cause it's New Year's Eve, you know. Horrid stale New Year's Eve we shall have! no fun at all; unless you'll stay and have tea with us, Miss Deshon; oh, do!" and he looked up coaxingly at Gyneth.

"I haven't been asked," she answered smilingly.

"Oh, but I know papa and Gussie would like you to have tea with us," chimed in little Ellen, "and we're going to have a cake and some buns; Gussie promised we should."

"I shall ask papa to ask you," continued Horace, to the amusement of the Armstrongs; but Gyneth interposed with "No no, thank you, dear Horace; please don't do that, I couldn't stay if I were asked."

"Why not?" clamoured the children; and to silence them she answered hastily with the first excuse that came into her head. "We are expecting my cousin, Mr. Grantham, and you would not have me be so rude as to run away from him, would you?" though she grew hot as fire the next minute at seeing Frank Armstrong's eyes fixed on her with a sad inquiring gaze, as if some painful consciousness had been re-awakened by her words.

She made haste to say good-bye, and continue her walk, and when a sufficient distance had been accomplished she conveyed her little flock safely

home, going in for a minute with them that she might report how very good they had been.

She found Augusta in the hall setting to rights the contents of a cupboard which was the ordinary receptacle of the children's toys, and now being open, presented to view an endless confusion of cracked drums, headless horses, and broken dolls.

"I have been putting away some of the children's messes," she said, "they leave their playthings here, there, and everywhere, and papa does so dislike to see the house all littered over on Sunday; when I tell them to put their things away themselves, they just throw them in here, and make this cupboard the untidy place you see it now. So I am often obliged to do all the putting away, myself."

"But indeed you are not fit for it to-day," said Gyneth, "do let Horace and Ellie try their powers of being tidy for once; it grieves me so to see you standing about while you look so ill."

"It is only a cold; I don't know why everybody should try to make me out so ill," said Augusta fretfully; "Dr. Crowhurst has sent for papa to see a poor woman who is dying; and papa declares he shall bring him home with him, and if there's anyone I hate it is that man. Aunt Clarissa says she's sure he is not a gentleman, and because when he first knew me I was only a child, he chooses to treat me as a child still, calls me by my Christian name, and all that sort of thing."

"But perhaps his medicines may do you good, though he himself is not pleasant," said Gyneth, scarcely able to suppress a smile.

"I don't believe it. It would do me much more good to be let alone. I wanted papa to let me go to church this evening; it would rest me far more than staying at home and being worried by the

children, but he won't hear of it. I was to have played the organ, and I have been practising a piece on purpose; (I have always played at the week-day services lately; if I didn't we should have no music, for the organist says he can't attend except on Sundays:) and now papa has asked Miss Boyd to play it instead. So tiresome, after all my trouble in learning it;" and the poor little girl being completely overdone, burst into a fresh fit of that helpless hysterical crying which had awakened Horace's contempt.

Then Gyneth forgot everything but that she was a poor, suffering, overtired child, and putting her arms round her, kissed her with a warm protecting love and tenderness which hitherto she had not supposed herself capable of feeling towards this ceremonious and stately little personage, and persuaded her to return into the drawing-room and lie down on the sofa.

"I can't think why I should be so stupid," faltered Augusta, struggling with her tears, "I suppose I really am ill, for I never cry when I am well; I have such a painful feeling here," and she put her hand to her chest, "as if there were a great weight there suffocating me. But don't tell papa!" and she sprang to her feet again. "I can't bear him to be anxious about me; and then he would want me to stay in bed to-morrow, and I know if I do, no one will attend to his comfort, and the servants won't be able to get to church, and the children will be running riot; I *must* keep up."

All the obstinate force of her nature was set upon this point, and there was something well-nigh pathetic in this stern self-devotion to what she imagined her duty, though at the same time it was very painful to see how her will rose in unconscious rebellion against the Highest will, how

she *would* not be ill, would not own herself conquered.

She dried her eyes, smoothed down her hair at the glass, and resumed her task of mending what seemed an interminable rent in Ellen's merino frock. Only as Gyneth rose to go she put out her hand with an intreating gesture, saying, "Oh, do stay till papa comes in, I don't feel quite so ill when some one talks to me, as when I am left alone with the children, and here they all come! Have you washed your hands, ready for tea, children? Horace, go and help Geoffrey down stairs, he doesn't like Sarah to do it, she hurries him so. Now, Miss Deshon, do stay, and tell me about your eldest brother."

"I should like to stay, but Lawrence is waiting outside for me, and I'm afraid he will be vexed at my keeping him so long, besides it is getting late. But I believe some of my home-people are coming to church this evening, and if you like I will come to you then, and stay with you while they are at church, and they can call for me on their way home. Perhaps you could make me of some little use, I should be so glad."

"Oh, but I shouldn't like you to miss church for me, and papa might not be pleased at my letting you do so; can't you stay now and have tea with us? and then your friends can call for you on their way to church. Oh, but I forgot, you haven't dined!"

"That is nothing, I have had all that I want, but I—I," and she hesitated as the thought passed through her mind, "If I stay now I shall not be at home to welcome Lewis when he arrives." It was but a moment, however, that indecision kept her silent, then with the mental reflection "no matter, I can easily give up this little pleasure, and Lawrence can explain, so that he may not

think my absence unfriendly ; mamma will not mind, she would not like me to miss our ordinary guests, but she will not mind my missing *Lewis* ;" she answered, " Very well then, I will stay if you will have me, and are sure I shall not be in the way. I will just give my brother a message to mamma, and then I will take off my bonnet and settle down comfortably."

And so she did settle down, with little Alice on her knee, and the rest of the children gathered round to listen to a story which she took care to make interesting enough to keep them quiet, and beguile poor Augusta into a temporary cessation from cares ; but it may be doubted whether she were comfortable, for the heat of the room oppressed her, and it was difficult to keep her mind fixed on the story, while haunted by a remembrance of poor Mr. Armstrong's sad face, and by fears that Lewis—if he thought of her at all,—would think her unkind for having absented herself that particular evening.





CHAPTER XXIX.

"Prythee, dear friend, use not so entire an abstinence ;
open thine ears at least to sweet sounds, an thou wilt not
open thy mouth to such sweets as do please the palate."

ANON.

HE new year dawned upon Gyneth under somewhat unexpected circumstances. When the joy-bells rang out their chime she was seated in a bedroom at the Rectory, keeping watch over the restless slumbers of poor Augusta, and not as yet intending or caring to seek rest for herself.

Augusta was very ill ; the neglected cold had settled into serious inflammation on the chest, and her feverish excitability had increased till she had become light-headed, and had begun to talk such indescribable nonsense as half-amused, half-frightened, the children, and made Gyneth and Mr. Weatherhead uneasy. Dr. Crowhurst arrived during tea-time, and ordered her instantly to bed, and Miss Boyd, who fortunately came in at that moment, beguiled poor Gussie into obedience, and submission to the various remedies prescribed by the dootor. Time was needed to apply these, so Miss Boyd arranged with Mr. Weatherhead that she

should remain at the Rectory for an hour or two instead of going on to church, and turning to Gyneth with a sweet smile said, "I think Miss Deshon will take my place at the organ, will she not?"

The rector caught at the notion, and Gyneth being obliged to admit that she had sometimes played the Cathedral-organ under her master's superintendence, though never during service, found herself at once appointed organist for the nonce, and had the music which had been chosen for that evening put into her hands that she might see whether she could play it.

So when Mr. Grantham came to church at seven o'clock with Colonel Deshon and little Fanny, he did not see Gyneth in the pew as he had been told he should, but from the organ came a low sweet reverent strain, somewhat tremulous in its first notes, then swelling into richer harmony, which he recognised, as having heard it played, and by those same fingers too, one Saturday afternoon at the cathedral, when only the music-master and himself were present. Fanny fidgeted about, and peered over into the rectory-pew in search of her sister, until admonished by her father to sit still, and then as a help to allay the restlessness Mr. Grantham whispered, "She is at the organ, hark!" not foreseeing perhaps that Fan would announce on her return home, "Do you know, mamma, Cousin Lewis found out directly that it was Gyneth who was playing the organ; wasn't it extraordinary? for he couldn't see her, or anything, he guessed by the sound;" an announcement which procured for him a mischievous glance from Mrs. Deshon's eyes, none the less disagreeable to him because he bore it with proud unconcern.

"I wonder Gyneth consented to play, I should have thought she would have been much too frightened," said the mamma; "she always looks

so shy and piteous when she is asked to play at parties."

"But surely that is quite a different thing," replied Mr. Grantham, coldly; the remark being apparently addressed to him; "in playing in company there is a kind of display, and attention is of course drawn to the musician, which is embarrassing to a shy person; but in playing in church I should think self must be forgotten altogether, and the audience forgotten too."

Clearly he chose only to speak of the matter in the abstract; Colonel Deshon answered his wife's remark more definitely when he said, "I think Gyneth played because she was told to; the first thing she said to me when she came out of church was, ' You didn't mind my playing, did you, papa? Mr. Weatherhead wished it, so I couldn't refuse to try.' I thought I never heard the chants sound more beautiful, did you, Grantham? Gyneth managed to sustain the voices with her notes so well, instead of overpowering them as the organist here does; and how well she played that piece after the service."

"It struck me that she was a little out of practice," said Lewis, drily.

Colonel Deshon looked as if he rather resented the criticism; Mrs. Deshon smiled, and was more gracious than ever.

But Mr. Grantham had something further to say on the head of Gyneth's want of practice, only it was said not to the father and mother, but to Lambert.

Gyneth did not come home that night, for she persuaded her father to let her call at the rectory, as she had promised, on their homeward way, and inquire how Augusta was then, and she found Miss Boyd in great distress at not being able to stay, as Augusta required constant attendance,

and could not endure the noisy activity of the servant who bustled in and out of the room, having almost more work to do than she could properly get through.

"I would stay willingly, if it were not for my father," said Miss Boyd to Gyneth, "you know he is a great invalid, so paralysed that he can do scarcely anything for himself, therefore I can never be long away from him."

"But how do you manage about your schools?" Gyneth asked in surprise.

"Oh, I have help; I cannot be so systematic with the children as would be right under other circumstances, for my time is so broken, but we manage as we can, and when Alex is at home he takes part of the nursing, he is so very good and thoughtful. Nevertheless I must go home now to give papa his supper," and she looked at her watch. "I wish I could have seen this poor child better provided; the only good nurses I know of in the town are engaged just at present."

"I am not a good nurse, but if you think I could be of any use to Augusta, I would willingly stay," said Gyneth. "I will ask papa if I may, he is waiting at the gate for me—only will Mr. Weatherhead like it? it seems so presuming of me to invite myself."

Miss Boyd laughed. "It is a kind of presumption which I wish were more common; Mr. Weatherhead will thank you very much I am sure. I did not like to ask you to stay because I did not know whether you could be spared from home."

"Oh, very easily," said Gyneth, rather sadly, "but I cannot be quite sure of papa's consent till I have asked him."

And she went down to the gate to speak to him. He was a good deal astonished at the proposal, afraid that she would knock herself up, and in-

clined to think that a hired nurse would do as well, but when she told him what Miss Boyd had said, he began to withdraw his objections.

"I don't know what mamma will say, but I don't like to prevent your being of use to Miss Weatherhead," he said at last; "only are you sure Mr. Weatherhead will like you to stay? you are almost a stranger to him."

"Yes, and perhaps he would rather be without me, but Miss Boyd will ask him, only there was no use in proposing it till I knew whether you would let me stay, papa. May I say that you consent? Then Miss Boyd will go and see if Mr. Weatherhead would like it, he will not mind telling her if he doesn't want me."

Accordingly Miss Boyd went to speak to the rector, who had come home very quickly, and was in his daughter's room; and certainly he too was rather astonished at the notion of accepting Gy-neth's services as a nurse. "Did she offer it herself? Does she really care for my poor little girl?" he said rather incredulously; and, fortunately, Miss Boyd was able to answer both questions in the affirmative, adding, "I don't think Gussie could have a gentler or kinder nurse than Miss Deshon will be: she is very young certainly; but Dr. Randolph was speaking of her the other day, and saying how sensibly she had behaved during her brother's illness."

"But we must think of Miss Deshon herself! there will be no one to make arrangements for her, and see that she is comfortable; it will never do to let her knock herself up; she does not look very strong," objected Mr. Weatherhead.

"No, but if you will give me leave, I think I can provide a little for her comfort before I go. Will you tell me what I am to say to her, for Colonel Deshon is waiting?"

"Gussie likes her very much," said poor Mr. Weatherhead, and in that thought he yielded. When Gyneth went down to the gate again it was to announce that Mr. Weatherhead would like her to stay, and to beg that a few necessary things might be sent her from home.

"And when will you come back? to-morrow, I hope?" said her father, as he bade her good-night.

"If I am not wanted here; but if I am, may I not stay till Monday, papa?" Mr. Weatherhead said at tea time, that if Augusta continued ill he would ask his sister who lives in London to come to him on Monday; but he will have to be out so much to-morrow, and there will be all the little ones to take care of; the nurse is away."

"So you are going to be a nurse in two senses. Well, take care of yourself, I shall call here on my way to church to-morrow; and whether I let you stay till Monday, or not, must depend on how you are looking. Lewis must forgive you this rather shabby behaviour towards him, since there are more urgent claims on you. Mustn't he, my little girl?"

She turned apologetically towards the silent Mr. Grantham. "You will not think me rude, Cousin Lewis?"

He murmured some polite assurance to the contrary, and she turned away chilled, and feeling as if he did not care whether she stayed or not; but when Colonel Deshon and Fanny had passed on, he lingered, and seeing her embarrassed by the intricate fastening of the gate, came to her assistance.

"Good-night, little 'Sœur de Charité,'" he said with a smile, which she felt rather than saw, as having fastened the gate he put his hand through its bars. Then, as her little cold hand stole into his, he added in a low voice, beneath which some very deep feeling seemed repressed:

"God bless you :

'The moon's eye her ain sweet sel'
Though she doesna shine for me.'"

The warm kind tone, the earnest benediction did her good and cheered her; but as for that allusion to the moon she could not imagine what he meant by it.

Miss Boyd, before she went away, arranged in concert with "Sarah," some provision for Gyneth's comfort, by which means Gyneth was able to procure some sleep during the night, though she did not feel justified in lying down for very long, as Augusta was restless, and often called for something to drink, or begged to have her pillows turned to the cool side. Gyneth found that poor little Geoffrey slept in his father's room, and she was roused to a feeling of admiring pity when Sarah told her, that "Master was so patient with him, it was quite a wonder, she'd heard Master Geoffrey say as his Pa would get up twenty times in a night to bring him anything he wanted; and sometimes, when he was restless, would light a candle and read to him till he fell asleep."

This by night, and then hard work in the parish by day, no wonder the rector looked so old and care-worn; the marvel was, how he could keep his energies so fresh, and be so ready to undertake new labours, as in the case of the evening school for instance.

Gyneth felt it quite a pleasure to be of the smallest service to him, though she carefully concealed from him as much as she could of her efforts in his children's behalf, and never allowed him to guess that after he had retired to his room that Saturday night, she finished the mending of Nelly's frock; and that it was she who, with some help from Nelly, dressed the little ones on the Sunday

morning, and enabled Kitty to appear with elaborate plaits as usual, and Alice with the clustering curls that the father was so fond of. He was very kind and courteous to her when she appeared at the breakfast-table, and seemed very glad when Colonel Deshon gave permission for her to remain to the next day; but he still thought her cold, and rather wondered to see how the children clung round her, and how Miss Boyd's sweet eyes shone on her with something that was nearer love than liking, as they concerted together little plans for the benefit of the invalid.

His wonder would have ceased if he could have seen all that took place when he was absent,—the true love and patience with which Gyneth waited on his poor little daughter, the winsomeness with which she beguiled the younger children into quiet, the humility with which she tried to correct the occasional mistakes her want of experience made her commit. Augusta rebelled against the remedies prescribed by the doctor, whenever they were in any way painful, and was so far from being like Lambert "*a patient*" in the true sense of the word, that Gyneth's remembrance of what had soothed and comforted him was of but little use in this case. Now and then the feverish tossings subsided for a while, and Gussie entered into conversation, or asked Gyneth to read to her, but she did not seem to care for any of the reading appropriate to the day, complained that trying to think made her head ache, and said almost crossly, that "she wished Gyneth would think of something new to repeat to her, and if it *must* be something 'serious,' she would rather it should be a hymn than anything else."

Gyneth was startled at finding that serious thoughts could be burdensome to one so religiously educated, but set it down to the nature of Au-

gusta's illness, for though the delirium of the previous night had passed away, a good deal of fever remained, and the poor child was evidently still somewhat confused in mind. Fortunately the "something fresh" was not difficult to find, for Gyneth's memory was stored with hymns, many of which were quite unknown to Gussie, and at length the hot restless face softened into pleased attention as she began to repeat those quaint but beautiful lines from "The Hymnal Noted," which describe "the Shepherd true" recalling to Himself His wandering sheep. Her voice unconsciously deepened in earnestness in the verse:

"I thought His love would weaken
As more and more He knew me,
But it burneth like a beacon,
And its light and heat go through me.
And I ever hear Him say
As He goes along His way,
'O silly souls, come near Me,
My sheep should never fear Me,
I am the Shepherd true.'"

And as she ended it Augusta raised herself on her elbow to look at her, and exclaimed, "How touchingly you said that! as if it were so real to you."

The luminous eyes drooped beneath this curious gaze, and a carnation glow stole into Gyneth's cheeks, but she answered softly, "I hope it is real to me; the one great Love that we can never tire out, seems to be what we can rest upon, even when we are most weary with ourselves and all else." Words which doubtless to herself appeared very poor and inadequate, but which lulled Augusta into more tranquil reverent musings than she had known for many a day.

Horace was so good all that Sunday that Gyneth could scarcely believe he was really so trou-

blesome as Augusta had been fond of representing him, but she partly changed her mind the next morning when he, and Kitty, and little George romped themselves into outrageous spirits in the garden, and would not try to be quiet when a fall of snow brought them into the house. The inflammation had lessened, and Augusta was no longer feverish, but very weak and suffering, dreading the least noise, much disposed to find fault with all that was done for her, not liking to have Gyneth out of her sight, and yet complaining that there was no one to look after the children, and fretting at her own incapability. Under such circumstances, it was not a little trying when Horace and Nelly began to sing negro melodies at the top of their voice, and answered Gyneth's remonstrances by a vehement repetition of the chorus of one of the songs, "Jem, crack on, I don't care!"

"Oh, those horrid negro songs!" said Augusta, in a weak fretful voice, "Horace knows I can't bear them, they're so vulgar—why didn't you make him stop, Gyneth?"

"I could scarcely make him hear me, he was singing so loud, but I will try again when they have finished that song, and your papa will soon be in, I think, he said he should not be out long."

But Mr. Weatherhead's return was unexpectedly delayed, and Gyneth passed that morning some of the most uncomfortable hours that she had ever spent, and was looking quite fagged and weary when Miss Boyd came in between twelve and one o'clock to see if she could do anything to help. The children had been indescribably noisy and tumultuous, Horace the worst of any of them, and it was a great relief to Gyneth when Miss Boyd proposed to take him home with her and give him into her brother's charge for the rest of the day. Gyneth's "thank you," was so full of

gratitude that it made Miss Boyd say, "I am afraid he has been a great worry to you," and then as Gyneth answered, "I ought to have done more to prevent it: I have managed very badly," something in the humble tone touched her so much, that with a murmured "Poor child!" she leant forward and kissed her.

Gyneth's face quite beamed with delight; she had thought Miss Boyd very kind, but had never dared to expect from her such warm tenderness as this.

"Will you come and see me some day?" Mary went on in her soft pleasant tones. "I have so little time for visiting, that I never attempt to call on fresh people, only try to keep up my few old acquaintances, but if you will dispense with formalities, and will come in, any time you are passing by the door, I shall be so glad, and you can see my little, or rather my *big* scholars, such great girls some of them are!"

"Oh, I have so wanted to see them; my brother told me about them; Mr. Weatherhead took him to see both your schools one day."

"Both the industrial schools, I suppose you mean," said Miss Boyd quickly; "I do not meddle with the boys' school, it is Mr. Weatherhead's affair, and he has got a capital master there, so that it is much more of a model school than mine is."

Gyneth was puzzled, but afterwards she came to understand that the boys' school was supported by Miss Boyd's means,—with a prospect of its being made partially self-supporting in time,—but that she left the management of it entirely to the rector and shrank from claiming it as her school, or allowing her share in the undertaking to be known; while the girls' school being under her own roof was manifestly hers, and though

never boasted of was understood to be her own life-work.

No more could be said at that time, for there were Augusta and the children to be thought of, but Gyneth was not likely to forget or neglect her new friend's invitation; it opened a fresh source of pleasure and interest to her, which she was heartily glad to avail herself of.

Meantime Lewis had been labouring to procure pleasure for her in another direction; and probably no other motive would have given him resolution to remonstrate with his favourite "Bertie," more especially when they had been enjoying a delightfully amicable chat in the twilight of the Sunday afternoon, which it seemed cruel to interrupt by such a disagreeable thing as fault-finding.

He dashed right into the subject thus:—"Bertie, I want to know why you have let Gyneth forget all her good music?"

"Has she forgotten it?" said Lambert. "I thought she meant to keep up the practice of her old pieces a little, but the truth is, none of our home-people care much for that style of music."

"Except you, and you do, you know you do. You can't impose upon me, my boy. I know you like music, and I know what sort you like too."

Lambert smiled and blushed, but in the dim light neither smile nor blush were visible, and Mr. Grantham was disappointed by his silence, and began to wax somewhat indignant.

"It's very right to be self-denying, I'm not saying anything against that; but it is too bad when people can't mortify themselves without mortifying somebody else! I confess I can't see why it should be a sin for you to indulge your natural taste for music, I believe it would do you a great deal more good than harm; but, setting that aside, you should have considered, before, for the

sake of some possible benefit to yourself, you let Gyneth deprive herself of one of her greatest pleasures by making it appear as if she would be selfish in keeping it up."

As a child, Lambert, like most timid people, had been prone to make excuses; and to break himself of this habit, which he had found likely to lead him to deviations from strict truth, he had determined never to attempt self-defence; to this rule he had adhered ever since, spite of its having at times brought on him much unmerited blame, and accordingly his only reply to his cousin's tirade was a quiet, "I daresay I have been wrong."

Mr. Grantham laughed his own good-humoured laugh. " You provoking fellow! You are so mild and meek that it makes it impossible for any one to scold you properly; but seriously, Bertie, I want you to consider that without doing anything wrong, or committing any great enormity in the way of self-indulgence, you might take a little more interest in Gyneth's pursuits, and help to make her life happier than it is. Have you ever seen any of her poetry and scribbles of all sorts?"

" No, never; nor can I remember that she ever offered to show me any, or spoke to me of her writing."

" And of course you never gave her an opening to do so? You used to be very fond of poetry. I have certain most agreeable reminiscences connected with your reading Scott's and Wordsworth's poems for the first time one Christmas when you were staying with granny. Is that taste mortified too?"

" I don't know that I am obliged to answer that question," said poor Lambert, growing proud in the struggle to maintain his reserve.

" No, you are right, my boy; and I was impertinent to ask it," responded Lewis, in his most

friendly tone, "but to drop personalities ; don't you think in the abstract that it is better to make reverent use of such of our natural tastes as are pure, than to repress them all indiscriminately ? and in Gyneth there is something more than mere taste, something that is almost genius, and I think it is a pity that this should be allowed to languish for want of a little encouragement. For if one holds, as I do, that genius is a gift from God, one must admit that it is meant to be used, not 'laid up in a napkin.'"

"Yes," said Lambert, "and sometimes Gyneth has given me the impression of a person who has genius rather than common talent. I felt it once or twice in her playing, when she played some of her good music to Lady Eynesford, and since then I have seen it in her face, as it were, when she has been talking, I don't think it makes itself felt in her *words*."

"No, her shyness hinders her power of expression, she writes better than she speaks. But I am delighted to see that you enter into my meaning, Bertie, and now I shall hope a great deal for Gyneth from your encouragement. By encouragement, I don't mean praise, she doesn't want that, and if she did it would be bad for her ; I mean so much interest shown as shall make her see that she can give pleasure by her talents, and is not selfish in cultivating them. Oh, I know the sort of life, the sort of training that would develope her powers, and make her all that she could be, all that she *ought* to be ! If I were but free— ! but never mind, I am an old idiot ! she will get better help than mine if it is needed."

Lambert could not plainly see how the fine face was stirred by deep passionate emotion, half-fierce and half-tender, but the strange thrill in the voice struck him, and he did not feel as if any common

answer would suffice. So he was silent, and Mr. Grantham sat for a few moments with his face buried in his hands, then raised it, and said in a bright natural tone, " You are not offended at my rowing you so unceremoniously? and you will do what you can for Gyneth? she sets more value on your opinion than perhaps you are aware of, and her views and sympathies are on many points so much the same as your own that you and she ought to be a great deal to each other. By the by, I have often wondered, Bertie, where you got some of *your* views from, they are in a measure different from those of your home circle, and your friends in the regiment."

" I have got them from books chiefly," said Lambert, speaking rather reluctantly, " more especially from some that grandmamma and you have sent me at different times."

" And what first made you think that you ought to deny yourself the gratification even of your purest tastes? not any book that *I* sent you I'm sure," then as Lambert hesitated, Mr. Grantham added, " don't answer me if you don't like, but I am not asking from mere idle curiosity or with any wish to ridicule your convictions."

" Some of the books you sent me spoke of self-denial," said Lambert with effort, " of disciplining oneself, keeping oneself under, observing the fasts which the Church has appointed."

" Yes, I know, but they didn't say it was a sin to read good poetry and stories, and listen to good music, when one could do so without sacrificing any duty; they advised a check being kept upon one's lower tastes, the disposition to over-indulgence in food, and rest, and so on."

" Yes, but—, I tried that so far as I could, but it didn't seem enough; I'm afraid I found fasting quite pleasant, for I never had any appetite in

those days, and it was a great deal easier to go without food, than to take it when feeling disinclined ; and I wanted to find something that would be a *real* sacrifice."

"I see ! you are one of those happy people who are naturally sublimely indifferent to a good dinner, and of course the never being hungry made fasting easy work. And so you took to denying yourself in music and light literature ; but why didn't you keep to certain days ?"

"I—I didn't see why there should be any limits, when only myself suffered," faltered Lambert, almost inaudibly.

"Did only yourself suffer ? and besides, since our merciful FATHER has provided some pure enjoyments for us even in this world, is it not almost ungrateful to refuse altogether to partake of them ? One must limit oneself in the use of them, to prevent oneself being wrapped up in them, or by way of punishing ourselves for having been too self-pleasing in times past, but that is a different thing from the total abstinence principle."

"Yes, I have been wrong, I suppose," said Lambert, in a low sad tone that seemed to imply "I always am."—"I must have been, since it has made me selfish, and unmindful of Gyneth's pleasure."

"Write me down a wretch," said Lewis impetuously, "for I see I have been making you sad and self-reproachful, you, who are always so hard upon yourself. My dear fellow—believe me, 'everlasting droopings' are not good for you or anybody ; I shall be very sorry if I have made you sadder, instead of having persuaded you to allow yourself a little more enjoyment in life."

Lambert made no answer, but when some one presently entered with a light, and Lewis turned, as if curious to see what expression his words had

called up, the fair stern young face softened into a smile, and the thin left hand was held out cordially. So when Gyneth came home on Monday afternoon, (Mrs. Barrington—"Aunt Clarissa"—having arrived at the Rectory) rather tired, and wanting to be refreshed and amused, Lambert took such especial care of her as would have delighted the heart of Mr. Grantham, saw her provided with an easy chair, a footstool, and all other available luxuries, and—oh wonder of wonders!—invited Jeannie to read aloud to them some poems from a new book which Lewis had brought down with him. He never had been so attentively kind to Gyneth before, as he was now, never had seemed to sympathize so much in her tastes as he did from this time forward; she felt the change, and wondered at it a little, not knowing from whence it proceeded. Altogether her life seemed brightening; Bertie was recovering, poor Augusta was better, she had made friends with Miss Boyd, and her old friend Rose had once more become a good correspondent, her grandmamma was still with her, Lawrence was going on well, there was nothing wanting except—no matter what; but she wondered whether a real "*sœur de charité*" would have felt what *she* felt when that hand clasped hers through the gate, and she had to let it go and turn at once to her work.



CHAPTER XXX.

"If, poor soul, thou hast no tears,
Would thou hadst no fault or fears!
Who hath these, those ill forbears."

GEORGE HERBERT.

DHAVE succeeded! yes, indeed, I have, mais voilà donc! Here is the list; you will see my name about half way up."

"Oh, I am so glad!" this was the general chorus; and the Deshon family rose up almost simultaneously from the dinner-table, at which they had been seated, to crowd round Lawrence, who was standing in the doorway, looking very much elated, and handsomer than ever.

Colonel Deshon was the last to speak. "You have done very well," he said with grave approval, as his son pressed forward to receive his greeting; "I had scarcely expected so high a place for you, as from your account the examination seems to have been very difficult, and most of the candidates older than yourself."

"Yes, I was one of the youngest, and the competition was so great; there have been many rejected who had far more than the minimum of marks, and I was not sure but it might have been my case. I knew I had done pretty well, but I

did not know how many might have done better. Thank you for letting me remain in London till the result was made public. I did not want to come home while I was in uncertainty."

"Very natural," said Colonel Deshon, still in the same grave tone; "now sit down and have some dinner. How is your cousin?"

"Oh, as well as usual; I have a note for you from him in my pocket. He has been exceedingly kind, and since the examination has been over we have been so gay; out every evening."

"You dissipated boy!" said his mother, laughing; "you will become as fond of gaiety as Lewis Grantham himself."

"*Is* he fond of it?" questioned Lawrence; "he did not seem to care much about anything except some music we heard at a concert on Thursday; and yes, I forgot, he liked a party we were at on Tuesday, because we met Miss Burnaby there, she is spending a week with some friends in town; she sent a whole ocean of loves to you, Gyneth."

"Is Grantham smitten in that quarter?" inquired Alfred, for which his wife frowned at him; but Mrs. Deshon answered readily, "It looks like it, and I suppose we may prepare ourselves for some further news on the subject shortly."

"Excuse me, but I think you are mistaken, mother," said a gentle, respectful voice; it was Lambert's.

"May be so, dear Bertie," she answered, smiling, "you are a better authority than I as to Lewis's intentions; but I pity that poor little Miss Burnaby rather. Gyneth, my love, let me send you some more pudding."

Gyneth's "No, thank you," was low and tremulous, her heart swelled indignantly at these carelessly uttered insinuations; but she tried hard not to show or even feel any annoyance with the

speaker. "Mamma does not know Lewis as I do," she said to herself, and accepted this as an excuse for the words which she yet found so difficult to bear.

Lewis had been so kind in making Lawrence his guest during the examination, and the days succeeding it, and had taken such pains in entertaining him, that it seemed almost ungrateful of Mrs. Deshon to speak of him thus slightly; and perhaps her husband felt this, for he interposed with, "I should think Miss Burnaby is quite safe with Grantham; he has far too much kindness of heart, as well as delicacy of feeling, to trifle with any girl's affections. What a kind fellow he is! read his note," and he passed it on to her; "that is to say, if you can endure the odour of stale smoke."

"I never knew one of Lewis's letters to smell of smoke before," said Jeannie, with whom Mr. Grantham was rather a favourite.

"Nor do I imagine it to be *his* fault that this does," answered the Colonel, with a keen glance at his son.

Lawrence reddened, and looked injured, and his mother hastened to turn the conversation on his success, and to tell him such little matters of interest as had occurred at Harbournouth during his absence from home.

"Let me see, you went to London on the 2nd; then poor little Miss Weatherhead was still ill, wasn't she? She is nearly well again now, and came here this afternoon with her aunt to thank Gyneth for having nursed her. Such an absurd being the aunt was! all airs and graces, but kind-hearted though through it all, shouldn't you think so, Gyneth?"

"Yes, and I know she has been very kind, mamma. Gussie told me to-day that she is going

to send Horace to school, and has asked to have Geoffrey to stay with her again. Her husband is rich, and she has no children of her own, so she is able to do a good deal for her nieces and nephews."

"I should think it would be a great deliverance to your friend Gussie to have the charge of Horace, that enfant terrible! taken off her hands," said Lawrence.

"It is a great deal better for the boy, too, to be at school than hanging about at home," said Alfred. "I told Mrs. Ross so, when she was bewailing herself over the prospect of losing her 'little jolly friend.' I met her to-day with a whole stream of children. She has just come back from Lynmere."

"She came into the library this afternoon with Armstrong and his sister, and beset me with a petition to have the soldiers taught to sing in unison when they are marching, as the Germans do," observed Colonel Deshon, smiling. "Anthony was also with her, rather to my astonishment, and seemed much in favour of the scheme."

"I am surprised to hear that, but really Anthony seems quite to have taken up with the Ross and Armstrong faction, and to have abandoned the fast set," said Mrs. Deshon.

"A very good thing too," replied her husband, "I hope he is beginning to see what bad taste he showed in giving himself airs towards a brother officer, he was really tolerably civil to Armstrong this afternoon."

"And more than civil to the pretty sister, I'm afraid," laughed Mrs. Deshon, "I must send for him and administer a scolding on that subject. What would his mother say if she knew he was dangling after a beautiful little bourgeoisie?"

"I can't help hoping he may singe his wings a little," said Lambert, with a mischievous inflection

of his demure voice, "it would be such delightful poetical justice if, after contemning Armstrong all this while, he fell hopelessly in love with Armstrong's sister. Jeannie was the means of introducing them to each other, so she will have to answer for the consequences."

"But Miss Armstrong is quite a child, and besides Anthony asked me to introduce him, so I shan't take any of the responsibility on myself, you mischievous boy," said Jeannie, leaning back from her place at the table to smile at her brother, who was reclining in a sort of invalid chair placed at one side of the room, with a little round table all to himself fixed in front of it, an arrangement which had at first made him feel, as he laughingly confessed, as if he were put to dine apart in disgrace, but which was really very comfortable to him, as serving to screen his left-handed movements from observation.

The children came down to dessert, and Lawrence's health was drunk by great and small with all due honour, but his father's manner made him fear that something unpleasant was impending, and when the ladies withdrew, and Edgar was bidden to go with them, he longed to find some excuse for retiring too. The conversation went on much the same, however, after the ladies had gone, until presently Alfred responded to Colonel Deshon's pushing the decanter to him by a "No, no more, thank you," and with a rather significant glance at his father-in-law rose and quitted the room. Lambert half rose too, but a quiet "I would rather you stayed, Bertie," from the Colonel, made him sink back in his chair again. Lawrence was not long left in suspense as to what all this might betoken.

"I am sorry to spoil your pleasure this evening, my boy," began Colonel Deshon, gently and gravely,

"but I am afraid I might not have time to speak to you to-morrow, as I am going off early with the commandant of artillery to visit — fort, and I want to get this matter off my mind. I was told yesterday that during the autumn you were in the habit of frequenting the billiard-room at the barracks, and that you lost some money to Humphrey Morehurst; is this true?"

"Yes," said Lawrence in sore dismay, but trying to brave it out. "I don't see any harm in billiards more than in any other game, and we never betted high at all."

"Then if you saw no harm in what you were doing, why did you so studiously conceal it from me?" said Colonel Deshon, more coldly than he had spoken before; "and may I ask where you got the money to bet with?"

"It was my pocket-money, and some that mamma and you gave me at different times; you can't suppose that I should bet with any money but my own!"

"I am not willing to suppose so, but I am told that you left a debt behind you in Germany and that it was the money which ought to have been applied to paying that which you chose to squander in idle bets." Colonel Deshon's face and voice were both so stern now, that Lawrence began to quake, and Lambert ventured to say, "Mamma said the German debt was scarcely Lawrence's fault." "I shall be very glad to think so," was the reply, in a tone which had softened wonderfully in that moment's space; "if you had told me of this debt, and explained its cause, Lawrence, I would at once have given you the means to clear yourself from it. How was it that you never mentioned it?"

"I—I thought you would be so displeased, coming after my failure in the examination and all,"

said Lawrence, "but I had the intention to tell you all about it now, and also about my betting with Morehurst even if you had not spoken to me. I should have told you before, but mamma did not wish me to worry you till the assault of arms was over, and then came Lambert's illness which made me unwilling to trouble you with my affairs."

"Still you have not explained why you concealed your billiard and card playing, and made false excuses for going to the barracks."

"When the rein is drawn too tight, and one cannot break it, one must escape from it the best way one can," muttered Lawrence, with indescribable bitterness.

"Even if that way be mean and cowardly, and underhand!" exclaimed Colonel Deshon, now thoroughly angry, "I would rather have had open rebellion than this; am I fated to find *all* my sons cowards?"

"This is the first time that I have been called a coward, sir," said Lawrence indignantly.

Lambert's head was bowed in a very agony of shame.

"I do not accuse you of physical cowardice," the Colonel went on without noticing his eldest son, "but moral cowardice is much worse and more contemptible, and it is that which you seem to me to have shown. I hope that you may be more sorry for this than you appear to be, and that you will be open for the future. I can pardon boyish faults honestly owned to, but deceit and concealment are intolerable to me!"

"I don't think I deserve to be accused of deceit," said Lawrence, sullenly, "and as to the concealment, it was mamma herself who advised its continuance. I don't understand why she chose to tell you about all this during my absence, and without letting me know her intentions."

"Don't speak in that way of your mother, she has been only too kind to you," was the reply, in a voice full of pain. "It was not her wish to accuse you now, but something Major Willis told Alfred, led me to make inquiries of her this afternoon respecting what she knew of your doings, and of course she could not keep back the truth."

Lawrence coupled a German malediction with Major Willis's name, but caught up his words with a hasty "I beg your pardon," as he saw the expression he had aroused on his father's face.

"We will quit the subject for to-night," said Colonel Deshon icily, rising from his chair as he spoke; "I hope when I next speak of it I may find you in a more fitting temper, and better able to control your words."

He went away, forgetting for once to offer Lambert the support of his arm in his progress from the dining-room to the drawing-room, and not even noticing at the moment—so full were his thoughts of his younger son—that instead of going in at the drawing-room door Lambert turned up stairs. Five minutes after, Lawrence came rushing up; he was still very excited and angry, and his movements were impetuous in proportion; but he paused just in time to avoid running against Lambert, who was standing on the first landing-place, leaning back against the wall. "Was habst du? Are you ill, Bertie?" he exclaimed, startled by the white face and exhausted attitude.

"Only a little faint—I was stopping a minute to rest," said Lambert, taking long breaths between each sentence. "This is the first time I have tried going up stairs alone; and my efforts at independence don't seem to prosper."

"You are not fit to make them," said Lawrence, giving him his arm. "I scarcely expected to find

you down-stairs at all. You don't look so well as you did when I left you three weeks ago."

" You must not judge by to-night. I am a little over tired; and,—Lawrence, I don't think one ever looks so well when one is feeling grieved."

" Do you mean that I have grieved you? I am sorry, but I really couldn't stand being taken to task in that way. To hear my father talk, you would think I had committed the seven deadly sins!"

They had reached Lambert's room by this time, and he sank down on the sofa without making any reply, but looking so sad and grave, and moreover so ill, that his brother could not find it in his heart to leave him.

" If you had been in my place, don't you think you would have found papa's remarks rather hard to bear? coming just after one's success too, and when one was hoping to have given him more than usual satisfaction?" urged Lawrence.

" Yes, that made it very disappointing for you," said Lambert, with real sympathy in both face and voice.

" And you allow that the Herr Papa has not been over kind to-night?"

" No, indeed, I don't allow that," replied Lambert, with spirit.

" But what should you have felt if you had been in my place?"

" I believe I should have felt that he was almost too kind to me." It was uttered so simply and truthfully that Lawrence could not but believe it. " Do you know how severe you are?" he said, biting his lips. " I suppose you mean to imply that no treatment could be bad enough for such a miscreant as I am? I might have guessed as much, knowing your highly moral and proper views!"

"You mistake me," said Lambert, far more humbly and timidly than most elder brothers would have spoken in such a case. "I did not mean to imply that papa was too kind to *you*. There are very many excuses to be made for you, which could not justly have been made for me if I had done as you have done, and I think papa quite feels this. You might have had his forgiveness very readily, if—if you would have owned that it was needed."

Lawrence gave his shoulders an impatient shrug.

"To what depths of penitence did he expect me to descend? I was miserable enough about that wretched debt some time ago, but one can't go on being miserable for ever; and as to the billiard and card playing, I don't see why at my age I should not be free to choose my own amusements."

"That is for my father to decide; but you don't really mean that if he does not give you this freedom you are justified in taking it? You wouldn't have said so on Christmas-Day, I know."

"Perhaps not! I was a fool that day, ready to put myself back into leading-strings like a child."

"Not like a child in any contemptible sense, only in the way that we are bidden to 'become as little children, that we may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,'" answered Lambert, with sudden earnestness; "and in that Kingdom loyal obedience and scrupulous honour, are counted as noble and manly things, which no one need be ashamed of!"

Lawrence did not at once answer; but his beautiful eyes grew dreamy and sweet in their expression. "You remind me somehow of Schiller's 'Kampf mit dem Drachen,' in which obedience is set higher than the courageous dragon-slaying," he said presently.

"And there the successful knight comes back

expecting praise, and receives only reproof for disobedience," said Lambert with a smile. "Gyneth translated it to me yesterday, that I might be able to enjoy it with her."

"I know which piece you enjoyed most," said Lawrence.

"Which?"

"That where the young knight bows his head under the reproof, and is going humbly away. How few in the first flush of their success would have behaved like that! I can fancy your doing it though, Bertie."

"But you can't fancy my killing the dragon!" said Lambert, with a little laugh at his own expense, though he blushed hotly the while. "It is the meekness united with the strong courageous character, which makes one admire the young knight so much: it gives me almost a feeling of envy to hear about him."

"I don't see that you have any cause for envy now, when you are nursing an honourable wound, after having astonished us all by your bravery," said Lawrence, half in jest, half in earnest.

"Be quiet!" said Lambert, authoritatively, and turning his head away.

"But really, Bertie, I wish you would let me tell you what the Herr Papa said to Alfred about you—he—"

"I don't want to hear it, thank you," interrupted Lambert, in a constrained tone. "No, indeed, I am in earnest, Lawrence. I heard what my father said to-night, that showed me what his real opinion was."

"You don't mean—"

"Never mind. If you are going down will you tell mamma that I am going to be on the prudent side, and retire early to bed as she advised me. And will you please, say good-night to everybody

for me, and apologise for my bad manners in not doing so myself."

"Shall I send Ellis to you?" inquired Lawrence, longing to put a very different question, but effectually kept at a distance, as Gyneth had often been, by his brother's manner.

"Thank you, I can ring when I want him. Good-night, Lawrie."

The last words were uttered wistfully, and they made Lawrence turn round again, and say, "Don't think the miscreant altogether impenitent. I will endeavour to conduct myself decently when I receive the second part of the Herr Papa's lecture; but I should like to know exactly how much revenge I owe to Major Willis and Alfred."

"None at all, I hope. Major Willis said something casually to Alfred of his being glad that you had ceased to frequent the billiard and smoking-rooms at the barracks, and Alfred expressed some surprise to papa that this should ever have been your habit. That led papa to make inquiries, and mamma of course told what she knew."

"Wasn't he rather angry at her having counselled concealment, since he seems to have such a horror of that?"

"He may have been grieved, but if so, he did not suffer it to appear," said Lambert in a tone that implied, "that is not our affair."

Lawrence bade him good-night and retreated, and no sooner was he gone, than Lambert quitted his reclining position on the luxurious sofa which had been provided for him since his illness: there was a great dumb pain at his heart which made the attitude of prayer the only one possible to him at that moment.

Meantime the party in the drawing-room had become rather concerned at the prolonged absence of the two L's, and Gyneth was just setting off on

a voyage of discovery, when Lawrence made his appearance there. Colonel Deshon was playing chess with his son-in-law, while his wife looked over his shoulder, criticised his moves, and commented on the chances of his success; there seemed no trace of any cloud of displeasure having come between those two. The Colonel looked up as his son entered, and inquired for Lambert, and when the game was finished, rose up to go to him, saying, he must persuade him to have some tea. Lawrence darted out into the hall after his father.

"Papa," he said, with sudden resolution, "I am sorry to have displeased you; but now I want not so much to beg pardon for myself, as to ask you to say something to Bertie, that will counteract the impression of what you said just now about all your sons being cowards. I was sure you did not mean that to apply to him now, it would have been too bad!"

"It would indeed; I ought not to have spoken so thoughtlessly, but I never imagined—yet what can I say to him!"

Oh the hopeless reserve implied still more in the manner than in the matter of that last remark! Lawrence went back to the drawing-room, and Colonel Deshon went up stairs, and offered his son some tea, and condoled with him on being tired, but how to fulfil Lawrence's request he could not imagine. Nor was Lambert likely to help him while he persevered in such quiet polite refusals, such timid assurances that he wanted nothing, and that a night's rest would do him all the good in the world. His manner was the same as it had been before his illness, it had suddenly lost the measure of ease and frankness which it had acquired during the time when his father hung round his sick bed, nursing and waiting on him with almost womanly tenderness. He looked so utterly

wearied out too, that Colonel Deshon hesitated to say anything which might bring on a discussion, and yet could not feel satisfied in leaving him without having attempted to cheer him.

"I have had a word or two with Lawrence," he said at last; "he seems already in a better mood, thanks no doubt to your influence."

"No, not that, I think, but he is coming round to his own better self. He was so prepared for congratulations and praises this evening, that he did not quite know how to bear reproof at first, but he is beginning to see that he deserved it."

"I must talk to him about those foreign oaths that he uses when he is angry," said Colonel Deshon very seriously, "he has perhaps fallen into the habit without realizing how wrong it is; I shall never cease to regret that I left him so long at those Continental schools away from my own eye."

"He is very young still," suggested Lambert consolingly, though he fully shared his father's regret.

"Yes, but in some respects that makes such precocious faults as his the more painful. Bertie, you can hardly imagine what a comfort it is to me to think that I have *one* son who has grown up to manhood without my having ever heard a word from his lips that I could wish unsaid."

Lambert's face flushed, and grew pale again.

"I heard a man at Cambridge say a thing of another man which pained me very much at the time, but which I begin to think is to a certain extent true: it was, 'he has not pluck enough to do or say anything wicked,' and I suppose indeed that weak natures do not feel the same temptations as stronger ones do, their faults are more hidden, more petty, less glaring."

"If you are classing yourself among weak na-

tures, you are mistaken; I never knew any one with more resolution, more strength of purpose than you have."

Lambert's lips half unclosed in denial, but he remembered that one of the rules given in a certain sermon on humility, which he much prized, was "Do not even blame thyself if it makes others think thee humble," and accordingly he was silent.

"It ought to be a lesson to us all to see how you have conquered your cowardice for instance," Colonel Deshon went on, disliking the appearance of deliberately praising his son, and yet longing to efface the impression his former words had made, "it is the best example possible for Edgar, he has really been braver and more self-controlled ever since the night of your accident."

"He was so ashamed of having screamed, poor child! that it has made him determined to conquer his fears. I'm afraid he took it terribly to heart at first, did he not? he very nearly cries even now when any one makes allusion to the cause of the accident."

"Yes, he was very unhappy. I think he felt in his degree as—as I did,—that if your illness ended fatally, lifelong self-reproach would be added to our sorrow."

"Poor little fellow!" said Lambert, as though very much shocked, but apparently only noticing the words which related to Edgar, "I never thought of his feeling more than childish grief at my suffering, and I longed to be able to tell him that it was nothing so very dreadful, nothing but what I could bear."

"But how few would have borne it as you did! I never saw such heroism."

"Don't, please," said Lambert, in a faint voice, "it is very kind of you to try and magnify mere

endurance into heroism, you mean I know to comfort me by suggesting that I have passive courage if I have not active, but indeed it is better for me to face the truth, and see the full extent of my own cowardice."

"Bertie!" interrupted his father eagerly; but he went on in the same low tone, "A cowardly *man!* it is very dreadful to feel oneself that, very hard for you, sir, to own it as a true description of your son, but I am not likely, I hope, again to disgrace you openly, I must be more careful—"

"Disgrace me! what do you mean?" exclaimed the poor Colonel in despair, "is it possible that you do not feel how proud I am of you, and with how much cause?"

"Proud of *me!*"

"Yes, of you; there was a time I own when I never expected to be so, when if I had been told that you would one day show such courage and coolness as you showed at the assault of arms, I should not have known how to believe it, but—"

"Courage?" echoed Lambert, "then? I thought it had been another failure!"

"You don't mean to say you thought the accident in any way your fault?"

"I didn't know, I have never been quite clear how it happened; I remember hearing Edgar's scream, and I fancy that made me start."

"It made us all start, and threw Morrison quite off his guard, but if you doubt my testimony as to how well you behaved, ask Morrison himself, or Armstrong, or any of the men. I wish you could know what the feeling was for you in the regiment during your illness!"

"I know every one was very kind," said Lambert, "and sometimes your manner made me think that for once I had been able to satisfy you. That feeling was worth any pain while it lasted, but to-

night something seemed to show me that it had been a conceited mistake of my own."

"Not so, the mistake was in supposing that my hasty speech of this evening referred to anything but your past conduct, your behaviour when you were a child. I know I should only distress you if I asked your pardon for this and other ways in which I have made you suffer—"

"Never more than was good for me," interrupted Lambert hastily, finding it quite intolerable to hear his father accuse himself.

"We will let that pass; I have my own opinion about it. But, Bertie, promise me that you will not misunderstand me henceforth, that you will believe how entirely 'satisfied' I am with you—to use your own expression—and will not think it necessary to be so distantly respectful towards me. There may be, I think, a very real friendship between a father and his grown-up son, and though it is neither your nature nor mine to be otherwise than reserved in the general way, there may be very true and pleasant confidence between us if you will get rid of the notion that I am likely to be displeased with what you say or do, to act towards you as a harsh judge in short."

"If I have ever thought you strict, it was a strictness which I could reverence," said Lambert, "but I own I have been foolishly afraid—"

"It was not your fault; you were too severely treated in your childhood, and kept a child as far as discipline was concerned, too long. I think it was Lewis Grantham who first opened my eyes to the fact that the way to make you manly was to treat you like a man, and that you had firm principle enough to know how to make a right use of liberty. But don't let us talk any more, you are tired, and I ought not to keep you up; I hope you will have a good night."

"Thank you, and thank you so much for coming to me."

They shook hands, and parted quite in their ordinary way, Lambert rising respectfully from his seat as his father bade him good-night, but the weight which had lain for years at the son's heart was gone,—his father was satisfied with him,—he could not feel that he deserved it should be so, but so it was, and the remainder of his evening devotions was one long thanksgiving.





CHAPTER XXXI.

“There is a vision in the heart of each
Of justice, mercy, wisdom ; tenderness
To wrong and pain, and knowledge of its cure—
And these embodied in a woman’s form.”

ROBERT BROWNING.

WHEN Colonel Deshon next recurred to the subject of Lawrence’s misdemeanours he found the boy in a much better and more dutiful frame of mind, and much more ready to acknowledge his fault. He was even moved to the confession that he had a certain small private account with a perfumer in the town, for various essences, &c., which he had found necessary (!) over and above those which his mother had good-naturedly provided for him ; and though he quailed a little beneath his father’s scorn, he showed very becoming gratitude at being released from this debt, and for the very liberal supply of pocket-money which his father promised he should take with him to Woolwich academy.

“I do not wish to stint you in any way,” concluded Colonel Deshon. “I like you to have enough to gratify all your *reasonable* desires, but mind, I will have no more debts, and the sooner you learn to give up effeminate luxuries the better.

Whatever you do, be open with me ; I hope you will keep out of scrapes, but if you should ever be betrayed into one, tell me of it yourself, don't leave me to find it out from others. Can you promise me this ?"

Lawrence gave the required assurance, and really meant to keep his word ; his sense of honour though not strong enough to make him "true and just in all his dealings,"—something better than natural honour is needed for that in most cases,—at least made him feel that a *promise* must be kept, and his affectionate disposition was touched by his father's forbearance.

"After all he let me off very easily," he admitted to Lambert, and as his brother did not immediately answer, he added, "Too easily, I suppose you think ? I suspect if *you* had been in the Herr papa's place, you would have brought some of the pains and penalties of the law to bear upon me, wouldn't you ?"

"I don't know, perhaps I should," said Lambert reflectively, "it is odd to find myself taking severer views of things than my father, but I suppose I do ; *he* is so very kind and forbearing with us all."

"And you are so very cross, and such a complete dragon, as everybody knows, Bertie," said Gyneth playfully, and Lawrence began laughingly to quote "Si jeune et si sévère, O juge implacable!" which didn't look very much as if they were greatly alarmed by his severity.

Gyneth was now on the best of terms with him, and though she was still perhaps a little bit afraid of him, it was a pleasant wholesome fear, which just sufficed to serve as a check on hasty and ill-considered speeches ; indeed she was one of those people who, while knowing nothing of fear in its cowardly or slavish sense, cherish secretly a little

tender awe of those persons whom they love the best, and dread to displease them ever so slightly.

It was now drawing near the end of January, and the grandmamma had returned to her quiet home in the cathedral city, promising her son another visit in the spring. Lawrence was preparing to set off for Woolwich, and Jeannie and her husband were just going to spend two or three weeks with an aunt of Mr. Hutchinson's, engaging however to come back and spend a little while more at home—as Jeannie still called her father's house—before taking up their abode on their estate in the north of England. Thus Lambert and Gyneth were soon left to entertain each other, and many were the tête-à-têtes they enjoyed while Fanny and Edgar were engaged with Miss Manson, though not unfrequently at Lambert's instigation, Gyneth would lay aside the book or whatever it was that occupied them, and fetch little Katie down from her nursery, to be put through a series of play-lessons which the elder brother and sister had devised between them, and which Katie considered "g'eat fun." She was a bright intelligent little child, and when her thoughts were drawn off from herself, and fixed on counting the buttons on her brother's coat, as a lesson in numeration, or on finding out that the funny-looking triangle with little monkey-faced men peeping out at each side of it which Gyneth drew so cleverly for her was really an A, and the very same letter which she had seen embellished with a border of bluebells the day before, she was very natural, simple, and engaging. Her mother had taught her to read one or two easy sentences without having properly grounded her in her alphabet, and she scarcely knew any of the letters taken separately, though she delighted to rattle off her little bit of reading when any male guest was present to pet and praise her; and it was this vanity and self-consciousness

which Gyneth wanted to check, while at the same time increasing her store of real knowledge in a lively way, which should keep her happy and satisfied without fostering her self-esteem. The cunning little maid tried hard sometimes to extract a compliment from her brother and sister, but though such would-be-innocent questions as "Hasn't 'oo pussy been a good 'ittle pussy to-day?" or "Isn't de p'etty 'ittle girl in sister's picture 'ike Katie?" occasionally beguiled Gyneth into a caressing assent, they never won anything of the sort from Lambert. And yet all the while he was so truly and unselfishly kind, so good-naturedly mindful of his baby-sister's pleasure and benefit, that she never was able to pout at him for more than one minute, or to help loving him with the whole strength of her little capricious heart.

They were all so glad to have Lambert at home that they almost forgot to be sorry for the cause, but the continuance of his invalid state was wearisome to himself—though he was happier in mind now than he had ever been—and little as he said about it, he could not help feeling the days rather long, as the doctors would not hear of his venturing out in the wintry weather, lest he should take cold, the thing most to be dreaded as liable to bring on a return of the tetanus,—and thus he was not able to go to Church, to resume his class at either school, or to walk or ride with his father as he had been used to do. He did not the less sympathize with Gyneth's efforts to be useful, and encouraged her to avail herself of Miss Boyd's invitation to visit the Industrial Home, so accordingly one day she went thither with Fanny, and was shown into a pleasant cozy sitting-room, where sat an old gentleman propped up by cushions in an easy chair, and at his side Miss Boyd, reading the newspaper aloud to him.

Gyneth feared her visit was an interruption, but

the poor old man appeared pleased to see her, inquired kindly after her brother, and asked her if she had come to see "Mary's girls." He seemed to take great pride in recounting what good girls they turned out after some years of Mary's training, and Gyneth talked with him for some time on this subject, while his daughter showed Fanny some pet canary birds, and by her own graceful kindness of manner, contrived to elicit more politeness from the unpolished little maiden than Fan had ever before been known to show towards a stranger.

"And now Mary shall take you round the school, and I'll have my afternoon nap," said Mr. Boyd presently, and Gyneth rose in glad expectancy, but to her surprise, just as they reached the door of the room, the old gentleman called out in rather a fretful voice, "Come, Mary, Mary, you haven't finished reading the newspaper to me!" and the good daughter paused at once. "I will finish it now, papa," she said pleasantly, "I must just send for Mrs. Vesey to take Miss Deshon round the school, and then I shall be quite at your service again."

She despatched a servant with a message which soon brought to the door a neat matronly-looking person, not exactly a lady, but with an intelligent educated face, who reported that her scholars were now at needlework, and readily undertook to show the young ladies all that they wished to see.

As they went down the passage together, Fan remarked to her sister in an audible tone, "Wasn't it funny of Mr. Boyd to call Miss Boyd back, after he had said she should show us the school?" and though Gyneth gave a warning "hush," their conductress overheard, and said in quiet pleasing tones, "Mr. Boyd has never been quite himself since the severe illness he had eighteen months

ago, he is apt to forget what he has just said, and to say something contradictory, but Miss Boyd never lets him feel it if she can help, poor gentleman!"

"How good she is!" Gyneth could not help saying.

Mrs. Vesey's face lit up into such warm loving admiration as was quite delightful to see. "That is what all the children say, Miss, and well they may," she replied, respectfully.

The opening of the schoolroom door displayed a row of girls in neat stuff dresses of a small checked pattern, known as shepherd's plaid, seated on each side of a long table, the elder ones marked out by the distinction of wearing a lilac print apron, instead of a holland pinafore as the younger ones did. They all rose up, curtseyed, smiled, and resumed their work, and most marvellous was it in Fanny's eyes to see the neatness and dexterity with which many of them plied their needles. To Gyneth's great delight Mrs. Vesey bade them sing, and several pleasant lively songs were executed very prettily, one of the elder girls leading. "Miss Boyd instructs them in singing herself," Mrs. Vesey explained, "and a great treat it is to them, though she cannot give as much time to it as she would like, and I am sorry to say I am not able to help her, being quite ignorant of music, and not having at all a good ear for it. We have an harmonium here you see, in this little side room," opening a door as she spoke, "and of a Sunday evening Miss Boyd plays many hymns and chants, and the girls sing them, there are several of them that sing very nicely, but Miss Boyd says they want more instruction."

"Gyneth, couldn't you help?" cried Fanny, and as her sister murmured that she "could not sing well enough to be able to teach," Fan went on

"Oh yes you can, your voice is not strong, but it is very sweet, Bertie says so, and you know all about music so well."

They passed on through the rest of the house, saw the large orderly bedrooms, with their beautiful air of cleanliness, then went down stairs and saw the girls' dining-room; the kitchen, where a quaint-looking stumpy child, with sleeves tucked up, and a little close cap on her head, was helping the cook to clear away the cooking utensils which had been used in the morning; and the laundry, where were two or three more Industrial girls hard at work under the superintendence of another servant. "They take it in turns to wash and to cook, and to do the house-work," said Mrs. Vesey, "so many each day, and then they all learn besides to make and mend clothes, and to read and write and cipher, and to make gruels and things for the sick. Mr. Weatherhead sends here mostly for what he wants for the sick poor that he sees in his daily rounds."

"And Miss Boyd visits among the poor a good deal, doesn't she?"

"She does what she has time for, and that is more than many do who have full leisure; she has a district—one of the worst in the town—and when she cannot go to it on the right day she sends some one, but I could wish she would give it up, for I fear she works beyond her strength."

"But you help her," said Fanny.

"So far as I am able; and she has good servants who have been with her many years, and would do anything to serve her, but still it is the mistress with whom the responsibility rests, and she feels that, poor young lady."

"Have you known her all her life?" questioned Fan.

"Yes, I was her nursery-governess when she

was quite a little thing, and then I stayed to be nurse to Mrs. Boyd, who was an invalid for many years before she died. After that I married and went away, but about three years ago I became a widow, and Miss Boyd asked me to come back to her and help her with this school which she had just undertaken."

"I should like to be Miss Boyd! she comes up to my ideal!" quoth Fanny. As she said this, they turned an angle of the stairs and came upon Miss Boyd herself. "Papa is asleep now, so I thought I might join you," she said. "Have you seen all that you wish to see?"

Gyneth replied, that Mrs. Vesey had kindly shown them over all that part of the house which the girls occupied, and added rather timidly, "we have liked it all so much."

"Is it not good of papa to have let me turn his house upside down in this way?" rejoined Miss Boyd with her radiant smile, "he has never once complained of any annoyance from my maidens, nor has Alex either."

"You have taken care that no annoyance should be given, my dear," said Mrs. Vesey lovingly, "and the house is so big I scarce think the noise the girls make is heard at the other side of it."

"No, thanks to the rambling passages and the old-fashioned double doors which sanitarians dislike so much, we get on very well, and I don't think we are an unhealthy set either. Will you come and rest a little while in the quiet part of the house, Miss Deshon? I am afraid you are tired."

Gyneth did not care about that, but was glad to have a little more of Miss Boyd's society, and so followed her—after taking leave of Mrs. Vesey—to a small, snug, business-like looking room, where were a writing-table and a work-table, both of

which seemed to bear tokens of being far more for use than show.

Miss Boyd stirred up the fire, for the day was cold, and made her visitors sit near it ; then took up some work and stitched away busily, talking blithely the while. "Yes," she said, in answer to a remark of Gyneth's about Mrs. Vesey, "I don't know what we should do without her. I might, perhaps, have found a cleverer and more methodical person, but a better or a kinder there could hardly be, and the girls respect her thoroughly, which is a great point."

"How nicely some of them sing," said Fanny.

"Yes, very well, considering how little instruction they have had, and they do so enjoy it. I think too it makes them enter more into the feeling of the Church-Service, to be able to join in the musical parts of it. Mrs. Vesey took them to the service on New Year's Eve, and they have spoken several times since of the beauty of the music that evening. I think they wish we could always have the same organist."

"Why cousin Lewis said, Gyneth played as if she were out of practice!" exclaimed Fanny.

"So I am, and I know I played very badly," said Gyneth with humility. "It must have been my playing slower than the usual organist does, which made the girls like it better. It did not hurry the singers so much."

Miss Boyd let her work fall for an instant, and gave one kind glance at the sweet-tempered face. Perhaps it was being used to the self-satisfied Augusta, that made her so much value Gyneth's real modesty.

"I wanted Gyneth to ask you if she might help you teach your girls to sing," said downright Fan ; "but she never *will* think she can do anything ; it is quite provoking of her!"

"Do you find it so?" said Miss Boyd gaily; and then, in sincere pity to Gyneth's blushes, she went on, "You can't quite estimate, can you? how many things may hinder your sister from wishing to make such an offer."

"Oh but I do wish it, at least I should like it very much if I could be any help to you," said Gyneth; "but that is my doubt. I don't think I know enough to be able to teach."

"You know more than I do, I daresay, of music at any rate," her friend answered smiling; "but could you spare the time, and would your mamma like it? I should be very glad of your help; but I never dreamed of asking for it. I thought most likely you were fully occupied already."

"What have I to occupy me?" responded Gyneth, rather piteously.

"A good deal in your home, have you not? Little sisters and brothers always make work for the elder ones. And then, do you mind my saying that I have heard of your and Mrs. Deshon's kindness to the soldiers' wives?"

"Papa and mamma take great interest in them, and I have sometimes been able to help a little in working for them, but that is all; I have no opportunity of seeing them, unless they come to our house. Of course I have some home employments, and I can always fill up my time with reading; but still there are a good many hours that I could spare if it were for any real use. If you really like me to try and help you with the singing, how often shall I come? Two or three times a week?"

"I think if you could come for about an hour twice a week, without inconvenience to yourself, it would be a real boon to us, and we should be very grateful; but don't decide on the plan till you have thought it over a little, and are quite sure you would not dislike it."

"There is no fear of that, but I must talk it over with mamma before I can quite promise, though I don't suppose she will have any objection. But, Miss Boyd, may I ask if you have any soldiers' wives in your district?"

"Yes, several, and those not of the best class. They are those whose husbands have married without leave from their commanding officer, and, therefore, they are not recognised and helped by the officers like the other women, I suppose. Are they, poor things?"

"Not to the same extent, certainly," said Gyneth, "nor will they have any claim I am afraid to the married quarters, as they are rather oddly called, which are being built now. I shall be so glad when those are finished, for then the women who are living now in the barrack-rooms will not have to do so any longer; but that will not help the poor things you are speaking of. Is there anything that we could do to help them through you? Mamma says she always feels so sorry for them; but papa is obliged to set his face against the men marrying without leave, therefore we cannot take much notice openly of the wives of those who have done so."

"But their misery is very great sometimes, especially in one or two instances I know of, as the men are still compelled to live in barracks, and the greater part of their pay kept back of course to provide their rations, so that what they can give their wives is the merest trifle, not enough to keep them from starving; fortunately most of them can earn a little for themselves, but they are not always able to do this."

"I know, it is very dreadful!" said Gyneth, sadly; "I have thought of it often; but papa says there is no help for it, and that to be strict is the kindest way in the end—as well as the only right

one—though it does not always seem so at the time."

"But the poor wives!"

"Yes, it is they who suffer the most; papa says the men must be punished if only to deter others from following their example, but I think the terrible part of it is that the punishment falls hardest on those poor wives, many of whom I dare say never knew that their husbands had need to ask any one's leave before marrying them."

"And yet Colonel Deshon objects to your relieving their misery?" inquired Miss Boyd, as if she found this rather hard.

"No, no, indeed you must not think that! only to our taking notice of them too openly. I know it is only because his duty obliges him that he is severe, and often and often he gives these poor women coals and blankets and money for their rent, but he sends it through Mr. Weatherhead, or the chaplain, without saying that it comes from him. He says if only that number of men in each company married, who are allowed by the regulations to do so,—I forget exactly what the number is, six, I think,—there would be means for providing for them comfortably, even on a voyage, and they might be a comparatively prosperous set, whereas now all these hosts of poor women and children are a serious burden on the regiment, and a great perplexity to the officers, who scarcely know how to reconcile justice and mercy."

"But how hard the officers would think it if they were not allowed to marry when they wished!" said Miss Boyd smiling, "you see I speak as a civilian."

"I daresay they would," said Gyneth, with an answering smile, "but in reality many of them *are* prevented from marrying when they wish, by the fact that their pay is so small they cannot possibly

afford to marry—unless they have good private means—till they get their captaincy, even if then. There is a young officer in papa's regiment now"—Gyneth had not fallen into her mother's trick of saying '*our* regiment'—" who has been attached for years to a girl we know, but he does not think it would be generous to bring her to such extreme poverty as he must if he married her while he is a lieutenant, so he is waiting till he gets promotion. And I think, don't you? that one might reasonably expect the same patience and forethought from some of the soldiers; if they were steady they would get promoted to be corporals or sergeants, or at any rate in time their turn would come for being allowed to marry."

"Poor fellows! yes, I wish they could be wise and patient; often their hasty marriages turn out very badly for themselves, do they not? One or two of the women I have in my district would be the misery of any good man even if they had ample means for their support. Some of them are so piteously ignorant, I do wish they could be taught better; has not Mrs. Parry a weekly class for those in her district?"

"Yes, she teaches them to work and so on. I think it must be a good thing for them, don't you, Miss Boyd? *except*—" and Gyneth hesitated—

"Except that she reads aloud weak controversial tracts to them, which even if they do no harm do little good, is that what you were going to say? But I think others might try to copy what is good in her plan and yet avoid her mistakes. Is there no other officer's wife who would be likely to undertake such a thing?"

"I am afraid not," said Gyneth, reflectively, "but I will ask mamma about it. Only before I go will you tell me if there is anything we can do at once for the poor women in your district?"

"Thank you, there is one I want help for very much, a young mother with twins a fortnight old, who are so ill provided with garments that I found one of them wrapped up in its father's old great coat! while its mother was washing its one dress."

"I have some flannel and things at home, I will set to work at once," said Gyneth readily, "you will help me, won't you, Fan? Good-bye, Miss Boyd, and thank you so much."

"Thank *you* for explaining to me about the soldiers and their marriages, I am too completely a civilian to be able quite to judge of the matter, but I understand it now better than I did before."

"I wish you could hear it explained better; but you don't think papa unmerciful now, do you?"

"No, I think he is one who will do his duty at any cost—as I should have judged from his face,—but who can still feel for the offenders. Every one must honour such firm principle."

"And he is not at all cross at home," cried Fanny, "indeed he is not!" whereat Gyneth and Miss Boyd laughed, and the three parted very good friends.

But what could be done to help the soldiers' wives, was the problem which dwelt in Gyneth's mind all that day.



CHAPTER XXXII.

“ A little onward lend Thy guiding hand!
Thus daily may we gather better thoughts,
And arm our souls with steadfastness, or learn
That we have nought to gather, nought to lose
On earth, and in that knowledge learn our peace.
Then welcome disappointment and decay,
Bereavement and keen sense of loved ones lost,—
Full welcome, if they lead us in Thy path,
To cling the more to Thy parental hand,
Far better than false gleams that lead us thence,
And then desert us.”

The Cathedral.

HE months from Christmas to Easter seemed to Gyneth to pass with unusual swiftness, perhaps because they were more full of employment for her than the autumnal months had been. On two days in each week she spent not only the hour which had first been agreed upon, but *two or three* hours at the industrial school, and besides teaching the girls singing, was able to give some help in their other lessons. She had read and thought so much, that she only needed more clearness in expressing herself to make a very good teacher, and that she was gradually acquiring, by pains and practice. Her mother saw she liked it, and put no hindrance in her way, more particularly as

the school was on the common, not in ‘the odious town,’ and Gyneth took care so to time her visits to it as not to interfere with any home duty. Nor did Mrs. Deshon object to Gyneth’s affording such help as she could, through Miss Boyd, to the forlorn set of soldiers’ wives who had congregated together in some of the low streets in the town to live there cheaply and miserably until better days should come; and she even promised to take Gyneth with her to visit that more prosperous set who were just entering into possession of the married-quarters, as soon as they were likely to be quite settled in their new abodes. She laughed, however, at Gyneth’s proposal to get up some mothers’ meetings, which should be an improved copy of Mrs. Parry’s, declared herself unequal to the undertaking, and jestingly asked whether Gyneth thought Mrs. Ross, or Mrs. Trelawny,—another officer’s wife, remarkable chiefly for great splendour of costume and great deficiency of good sense,—were likely to be either able or willing to instruct the soldiers’ wives in domestic duties, plain needlework, and the management of children.

The scheme, however, was not so unlikely of accomplishment as Gyneth at first thought, for early in February the garrison-chaplain married, and when the bride arrived at Harbournouth, she at once set to work under her husband’s direction, to do what she could for the benefit of the soldiers’ wives and children. *She* was not obliged to have too strict regard as to whether the soldiers had married with leave or without, and she did her best to befriend all the women; and at Easter announced that she was about to have weekly sewing-classes for those who would attend them, and inquired whether Mrs. Deshon or her daughter would be inclined to help in teaching, or in reading aloud to the workers.

Mrs. Deshon smiled sweetly, said it would be no doubt a very good thing for the poor women, and that if funds were needed she should be very happy to contribute, but ignored the possibility of giving help of any other kind herself, and said that the time and place chosen would make it impossible for her daughter to do so either.

Gyneth held down her head and said nothing, except that when she bade the energetic little lady good-bye, she added, "I hope your plan will succeed, I shall like so much to hear how it answers," but she could not help thinking that as it was found quite possible for the carriage to take her into the town whenever she wanted to do a little shopping, or to go and see Miss Estcourt, its services might have been equally available in this case, if her mother had so wished.

The chaplain's wife, in the heat of her zeal, denounced both mother and daughter to her husband as very useless people, and declared that Miss Deshon was like a wax doll, dressed up and taken out to parties and to genteel airings on the common, but not suffered to come in contact with anything disagreeable, even for ever so good a purpose. "She might as well be kept under a glass-case at once!" ended the little lady indignantly; "while she sat there looking so refined and helpless, and her mother talked of the impossibility of her going into 'that horrid town,' I could not help thinking of 'l'hermine' in Florian's old fable, and the lines,—

" Pour arriver là bas il faudrait se salir,
Et moi je suis si délicate,
Qu'une tache me fait mourir!" "

But the chaplain knew something of the real state of the case, and mollified his warm-hearted wife's displeasure, affirming that Miss Deshon was

by no means helpless or useless either ; and meanwhile Gyneth was receiving Lambert's sympathy for her disappointment.

"Perhaps, if the class succeeds, and papa approves of it, mamma may let you help after all," he suggested.

"I'm afraid not, but if the thing is done, I ought not to mind that I have none of the doing of it," answered Gyneth, sweetly. "Miss Boyd will be so glad to hear that the scheme is really to be carried out; I must tell her about it to-morrow, I need not say anything of my having been asked to join, or of mamma's refusal."

"And some day you know you will be quite old and sage, and then no doubt mamma will grant you a certain measure of independence, even if you do not marry, though I suppose you will, sooner or later."

"Oh, no, Bertie, never!"

He had been speaking lightly, but she answered with such earnestness, that it made him say, "Why? do you think it wrong?"

"No, oh, no, of course not; but I am going to be an old maid, and live at home, I hope; that will not be the way to independence perhaps, but do you know, I think it is good for me to have my will thwarted, and to be obliged to submit, for when I was with grandmamma, who indulged all my wishes, I got into the way of being too independent and self-opinionated. I don't think I could have written that horrid conceited letter about the Greeks,—which I told you of,—if I had been at home, I should have felt directly that it would displease papa and mamma, and that I must not do it, no matter how much I wished it."

"Yes, I see; and submission has been a matter of principle with you since you came home, not of habit merely as it is with those who have been

used to it all their lives ; that must have made it somewhat difficult at first."

" It was, for a little time, because I had grand ideas about being useful, and it seemed to me hard that the things I was checked in were just those which I had thought right and good, and which I had expected would have been encouraged, but I hope I am beginning to see that my business is not to find out how I could be most useful, but how I can fulfil most exactly and patiently the plain duties which are set before me ; though I have not half learned my lesson yet, I'm afraid, for I have to spell it all out again every time there comes a question like that of to-day."

" That is the way to learn it perfectly in time, and when you *have* learnt it, perhaps some means may open for your being useful, consistent with duty and obedience. I don't think that deep feeling for the poor and their trials, and that great longing to help them, can have been given you for nothing, or that it can be wrong to hope that it may find a proper outlet some day, but meantime, of course, patience, and self-discipline are the best plan."

" Do you remember advising me not to make an ideal of life for myself, but to go on step by step, doing my duty as far as I could see it ? I have often thought of that since, and of my foolish saying that I had no real duties."

" You wouldn't say that now ?"

" No, I hope not, only—if one sees one's duty and does not do it, it is almost worse than the not seeing it."

" ' We have left undone those things which we ought to have done.' Which of us does not need to say that ?"

" And then the Absolution following gives one courage to start afresh, and try and do better ;

yes, one can never quite despair while one has such help."

"And you are not tired of everything now?"

"No; and I hope I shall be less tired every year; one may 'overlive' things in a good sense as well as in a bad one, I suppose."

She spoke bravely, and suppressed the yawn and sigh that would fain have risen when the striking of the clock showed her that it was time to dress for the weekly dinner-party which she always found so tedious; nor did she indulge in any recollections of the over-fatigued Lord Ronald, but was serene and bright when she re-entered the drawing-room after her evening toilette, though perhaps not looking quite her best or happiest, for her mother commented unfavourably on her appearance, and declared she had certainly put on the most unbecoming dress in her possession. "I think you must have forgotten, my dear, that Mr. Weatherhead and Colonel Jarvis and Major Willis and Anthony are going to dine with us this evening," remonstrated the mamma, "and that you should have dressed yourself accordingly. I suppose your thoughts were taken up with mothers' meetings, and all sorts of virtuous schemes, but I don't know why one should make oneself look a fright because one is charitably inclined."

If Gyneth had answered exactly as she felt she would have said that she didn't care how she looked, and would have begged to be let alone, but what she *did* say was "I am not sure that I can help looking a fright, but if you wish me to put on some other dress, mamma, I think there will be time for me to change this, if I make haste." And accordingly she was sent to effect this alteration, while Mrs. Deshon turned to Lambert with the remark, "What a comfort it is that she is so sweet-tempered! only think what trouble I shall have

when *Fanny* is a young lady, she is just as indifferent to her appearance as Gyneth is, and not half so biddable, she growls and argues whenever I want her to take any pains with her dress, whereas Gyneth submits very prettily, however much against the grain."

"One may hope that Fan will take pattern by her, such an example of loyal obedience ought not to be thrown away," said Lambert warmly, "but, mother, I can't be sorry that my sisters are not naturally fond of sacrificing to the graces. I grant that Fan's untidiness is objectionable, but Gyneth always looks refined and neat, and what more can one want?"

"My dear, you know nothing about it," said Mrs. Deshon, with a little arch nod of her head. "I have a distinct image of the dowdy little wife you will bring me home some day, some small gaunt being who has abjured crinoline, and has all her dresses made of black alpaca, or some such objectionable material; and the uglier she looks, the better you will like her; but that is not the way with most men."

"I shall be afraid to bring her to you at all, mamma, if you are going to estimate her by what she may have on, instead of by what she may really be," retorted Lambert, smiling.

"If she loves you I shall love her, let her wear what she may," said the mother affectionately, "but, Bertie, when you find this little lady you must let me have a look at her before you quite decide on her, do now, there's a good boy."

Lambert laughed, and the entrance of Colonel Deshon and Gyneth put an end to the conversation, more particularly as the Colonel had an announcement to make, namely that they must not expect to see Major Willis that evening, as he had just been telegraphed for from —, and had re-

quested leave to go there immediately. "I can't make out from his note whether it is his mother or his brother who is ill," concluded Colonel Deshon, "but perhaps we may hear something more definite from grandmamma, Gyneth says she expects a letter from her to-morrow."

"Yes, and I hope I may have one," said Gyneth, "I shall be so sorry if it is Mr. Willis who is ill, he is quite valuable to the whole town, for besides his duties as a minor canon and as curate to Mr. Mackenzie, he is always so ready to help any of the other clergy, and then he is such a friend of the Burnabys' too!"

The interest of this piece of news drew her out of herself, and though very grave, she was peculiarly pleasing that evening, and more than ever bent on dutiful obedience to her mother's wishes. She allowed herself to be drawn away to the piano by Anthony, though she would much rather have gone on talking to Mr. Weatherhead, because she knew it was Mrs. Deshon's wish that she should be obliging to her cousin, and when she had finished playing the selection of airs from "Dinorah," which he had begged for, she let him look through her music and choose another piece. "I like this rather, don't you?" he said aloud, holding up a favourite opera-air, then he continued in a voice too low for anyone but her to hear, "Do you know that Miss Armstrong is going away very soon?"

"Is she? but what long visits she has made; first, to Mrs. Parry, and then to Mrs. Ross," answered Gyneth, not with any intentional dropping of the voice, but in that soft key in which she usually spoke, and which was scarcely audible to the party at the other end of the room.

"Yes; but Mrs. Ross can't bear to part with her, and I don't believe she would go now if it

were not for that meddlesome brother of hers. Poor little Angela! the Fates are sorely against her."

"She would scarcely thank you for your pity, Anthony," said Gyneth, with some warmth; "why should you suppose that she does not wish to go home?"

"Well but—aw—you've no mercy on a fellow," drawled Anthony deprecatingly, "she's so killingly pretty! and so little and young that I never thought of any one's putting an inconvenient interpretation on our intimacy: why she's not quite sixteen yet."

"Then I dare say Mr. Armstrong is anxious that she should go back to her governess, after such a long holiday, from Christmas to Easter!"

"Oh, she knows quite enough, where's the use of trying to make a blue-stocking of such a lovely little creature as that? I never cared for that espiégle style before, but she is perfectly irresistible."

"So it seems," said Gyneth, smiling.

"And think of her being dependent on that old button-making papa, so that whoever marries her will have to be civil to him! Now Armstrong here is better off, for he has got great part of his mother's fortune settled on himself, and will have the rest whenever his father dies, the old man only has it for his life, and has no power to will it away. Whereas Angela's mother, the present Mrs. Armstrong, has no money, so whatever the second son and the daughters may have must come out of the button-making business. Oh!" and the little honourable groaned.

"You seem to take a great interest in their money-affairs," said Gyneth disdainfully.

"Because, unfortunately, poor younger sons are obliged to think of the £. s. d.; if I were Eynes-

ford I might marry whom I liked, and in that case I could afford to sink the button-making connection."

Gyneth's lips curled still more expressively.

Anthony regarded her with a languid stare not wholly unmixed with admiration.

" You don't know how aw—becoming, scorn is to you, but really you might be a little more sympathising. I haven't a creature to—aw—feel for me, cousin Fanny only scolds, and my mother would, of course, think it her duty to do so likewise if I were to tell her of my penchant for the little Armstrong."

" I don't know ; I think Lady Eynesford is so fond of you, that she would not oppose anything that was for your real happiness ; but Anthony, if you really care for Miss Armstrong, I can't quite understand your way of speaking of her and her family."

" Can't you ? why you see *she* is a little angel like her name, but for all that, her family are a set of parvenues ; and if my mother could be brought to be reconciled to the match, neither Eynesford nor Grace ever would be. No, I shall have to give her up, poor little thing ! *enragé* as I am about her now ! "

" Then indeed I don't think you have acted rightly," Gyneth could not help saying ; " why did you pay so much attention to her if you meant nothing by it ? "

" Il faut que je m'amuse," he answered coolly.

" There is no ' il faut ' in the case, it can neither be necessary nor right for you to amuse yourself in such a selfish way," responded Gyneth with spirit, though still in the same soft key. " If that good, kind, *sœur* Monique could see you now how disappointed she would be ! "

" Ah, the poor old *sœur* ! she would think me

'un véritable monstre ;' but, Gyneth, you talk as if I had broken the little Angela's heart, whereas she is but a baby, and will soon be consoled ; though I don't know that she will forget me very easily." And he heaved a sigh, and looked ineffectually conceited.

"We must not talk any more," said Gyneth, gathering up her music, "if I could have helped you in any way I should have been glad ; but if you think your duty to your mother will oblige you to give up any idea of marrying Miss Armstrong, we had better not talk any more about her."

She was heartily disgusted with him and glad to break off the conversation ; his behaviour seemed to her so selfish and frivolous, so destitute of any real tenderness, or honour, or generosity. And it was such conduct as this which her mother had ascribed to Lewis, with regard to Rose Burnaby ! Lewis, who was as true-hearted, as manly, and noble, as Anthony was the reverse. Well, it would be seen some day that he had not deserved those insinuations ; and Gyneth lifted her head in prospective triumph, though she knew that the proof might perhaps come in the shape of an announcement of his actual engagement to Rose, and something whispered in her heart, "In that case will he have treated *you* well, you whom he singled out as his one greatest friend, and then cast aside as if the past were of no account ?" She silenced this inward questioning by the thought, "I dare say there has been some cause for this, and though I shall be glad to have it all explained to me some day, surely I know him well enough to be able to trust him in the meantime." And then she went and sat down by Mr. Weatherhead's side again, and inquired whether Horace liked his school, and if there were better news of Geoffrey.

"Yes, my sister writes me word that Geoffrey is certainly better, and Horace seems well content with school, though I think perhaps he would not be sorry if his Easter holiday were a little longer."

"I daresay, it must be such a treat to boys to come home for a while."

"And an equal treat to their fathers to have them sometimes, I fancy," said the Rector, smiling. "I missed Horace sadly, but he is better at school; he had got beyond Gussie's management, and the contest with his riotousness was too trying for her, poor child."

"Is she getting strong again, do you think?"

"Yes, I think so, and she is rather disappointed, I'm afraid, at my not allowing her to resume all the duties that she had before; but I am resolved to be firm, for I see now that she was over-tasked; it was quite by her own wish that she undertook so much, but I ought never to have allowed it. Mary has found us a capital new nurse, an experienced person who will take excellent care of the little ones, and so relieve Gussie of this part of her burden."

"Oh, I am so glad; it was very good of Augusta to do so much; but it must have made you fear for her health."

"Yes it did, and though at the time that was my only fear, I see now that the over-strain was doing her harm in other ways. I suppose it is very difficult for useful women and girls, especially those unduly burdened, to escape the being 'careful and troubled about many things,' and my little Gussie has not quite escaped this danger. I was going to ask you, if you would come and spend a day with her soon; she is not quite happy about one or two of the new arrangements, and I think it would do her good to be able to tell her

troubles to you, if you don't mind listening to them."

Gyneth answered readily, that she should be very glad, and accordingly went one morning to the rectory, and was soon made the confidante of poor Augusta's grievances.

"I shouldn't mind so much, if I thought it were only on account of my health that papa objects to my doing all that I used to do; but I'm sure he has some other reason," complained poor Gussie, piteously. Gyneth could not say that he had not. "Perhaps," she ventured rather timidly to suggest, "he thinks that it may be better for you to have some quiet time every day to yourself. I know if I were so constantly occupied as you used to be, my mind would get all into bustle and confusion, and I should not attend properly to the quiet secret duties which I suppose we ought to fulfil with care if we want to keep the balance right, and not to get too much absorbed in outward things, even good things."

"Do you know," said Augusta, reddening, "he asked me one day while I was ill, whether I used a book of meditations he gave me some time ago, and whether I was careful to meditate every day on some portion of the Scripture, as well as read it? But I never could meditate in my life; if I try to, things always come into my head that I ought to have done, or must do, things about the house, or for the poor people; and when I told him that, he said it was a proof that I had too much to do, and that he had let too much responsibility be thrown on me, and I can't bear him to say that."

"But why not?" said Gyneth, gently; "you wouldn't like him to be less careful about you, would you? Do you know, I always think it makes one feel so deeply how much one is loved

when one's friends show that they are trying to help us to be good, not only to please us for the time."

"But I used always to be able to satisfy him, and now I can't. I don't mean that he is ever unkind or scolds me, of course not; but he looks at me so sadly sometimes, and I don't see why he should."

Gyneth thought of that line, which describes penitent Love as "feeling upon her heart the grieved and gracious Eye," and hoped that Gussie might ere long learn to see in the mournful compassionate tenderness of the earthly father, a type of that of "the Holy Friend above," Who grieves over those who will not grieve for themselves, and calls angels to rejoice with Him when self-satisfaction has given way to humble penitence. But she did not say anything; for though she was very fairly intimate with Augusta, she did not quite know how far she might venture with her, and was afraid of doing more harm than good.

"Gyneth," said Gussie, after a pause, "do you think active-minded people ever care very much for meditation, or are able to make long prayers? Don't you think 'laborare est orare' is their motto?"

"It may be so with some; but I think some of the most active people there have ever been, have found prayer and meditation their greatest help. I will show you some beautiful pieces about that in Bishop Taylor's writings, if you will let me. 'Laborare est orare,' seems to me only partly true: if we do all our work as for God, and offer it up to Him constantly, I suppose it is a sort of acted prayer, but surely there must be spoken prayer too, or how can we get the grace which will enable us to work in this way? S. Paul was 'in labours

more abundant' than all the other Apostles, but then how many and fervent his prayers seem to have been."

Augusta did not make any answer, and Gyneth not feeling herself entitled to preach, did not pursue the subject, so both the girls worked on for some time in silence, then Gussie said, "Papa wants me to study more, especially with reference to what I have to teach in the Sunday School. I used to think it would be delightful to have leisure for improving myself, but really I am so unaccustomed to that now, that when I sit down quietly with a book in my hand, I feel as if I were being idle."

"I can fancy that," said Gyneth, smiling, "but if you do it as duty, that feeling will soon wear away, and then you will begin to enjoy it. You always used to keep some time to yourself for practising and so on, didn't you?"

"Yes, it was quite necessary," said Augusta, in a tone implying that accomplishments were more imperative than serious study; "and now I have much more leisure than I had, for Horace is quite off my hands, and the elder girls are with their governess half the day, and the nurse we have now takes care of the little ones entirely, except at meal-times."

"Then I congratulate you!" said Gyneth, gaily, "for you are quite useful enough still, without being overworked or overworried. And now you will be more free to be your father's companion, and I always feel to be really companionable to a man, one must read, and study, and think; I never so much long to get rid of my ignorance and stupidity as when I am talking to papa, and that makes me value the time I have for study."

"But I thought you knew a great deal already?"
"No, indeed, only just enough to make me feel

how little I know, and how much more there is to be learnt. Is there anything you would let me study with you? I am trying to get a better knowledge of Church history than I had, and my brother Lambert has been helping me, he is going to Cambridge as soon as term begins, but he has promised to leave some of his books with me, so I mean to go on with my reading every day, and if you were studying the same subject it would be pleasant to compare notes, wouldn't it?"

"That was one of the subjects papa pointed out to me," said Augusta, with more brightness than she had yet shown, "shall I show you some of the books he chose for me, perhaps they are not the same as your brother's?"

She fetched some volumes from the book-case, and a lively discussion ensued, which turned the current of her thoughts from her own grievances, and made her wear for the time, such a bright face as quite did her father's heart good, when he came in and found the two girls together.

When in the afternoon Gyneth went up to put on her bonnet, to go and pay Mrs. Ross a visit, preparatory to returning home,—Augusta followed her, and showed her an engraving of Steinle's picture of the Good Shepherd, which was hanging over the bedroom mantelpiece. "Papa bought that for me," she said, "and brought it home to me one day after I had been showing him the verses you copied for me about 'the Shepherd true,' he liked those so much."

"And *you* like them too, don't you?"

"Yes, very much, I have learnt them by heart, I sometimes learn hymns and things now, when I sit at work alone, papa set me to do that, he said it would rest my mind, and that if ever I am ill again, or the others are ill, I shall find it pleasant to be able to say things to myself or to them.

And I know it *was* comfortable when you repeated hymns to me."

"I learned those hymns when I was with grand-mamma," said Gyneth, "I used to learn some every week and say them to her on the Sunday, I went all through the 'Christian Year' in that way."

"But that was such a babyish way," said Augusta, drawing up her head; "saying them like a task, I should hate that."

"But I liked it very much, and so did grand-mamma, I began it when I was quite a little girl, but it was so nice to go on."

"Papa said he was sure you had been very well trained," said Augusta, with some remnant of her old patronizing manner, then in an altered voice she added, "Gyneth, will you be quite my friend? I have no other, and I could not have told any one else what I told you this morning about papa. I think *you* can understand, can't you, how it *hurts* one," she spoke as though under the pressure of actual pain, "when the person one loves best in the world, seems suddenly dissatisfied with one."

"Yes, I know, I can feel for you, indeed," said Gyneth, tenderly, "only when such disappointments come, mayn't it be because one was getting spoilt, and needed something to make one humble? and then there is a kind of sweetness in the pain, because one feels it is doing one good."

"Do you like to be made humble?" was the rather strange inquiry.

"I suppose I don't naturally, but I can feel that it is right, that I needed it very much."

"Then is your father less pleased with you now than he used to be?"

"Oh no, not my father, nor any one in *that* way exactly," said Gyneth, colouring and hesitating;

"only a great friend I had, who used to tell me everything and always ask my opinion, and write to me when we were away from each other, has now ceased to do so, and though it is no one especial fault of mine that has caused the change, yet it must have been because I did not deserve all this kindness and confidence that it has been suffered to be withdrawn from me. I know I was getting conceited about it, and had learned to think it my right."

"And so you are glad it is over?"

"No, no, not glad; if I were good, as good as my brother Lambert for instance, I might be even glad, but I can't pretend that now; but one may feel that one's punishment *is* a punishment, and hurts one, and yet not want to have it taken away."

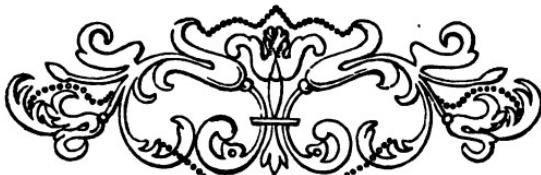
"May one?" said Augusta, musingly, as if the idea were strange to her.

"I must go now," said Gyneth, kissing her, "dear Gussie, all you have told me, as well as all I have seen, shows me so plainly how much your father loves you that I can't help thinking you will soon be quite happy with him again."

"I don't know," said Augusta, with the feeling that the hard *hard* task of giving up her pride had to be gone through before she could be in any way content with the change in her father, gentle, and loving, and tender as he was. But she clung to Gyneth, and warmly returned her kiss, and there were tears in those bright, self-confident eyes, which sprang, not so much from wounded self-love, as from a dim growing perception that in spite of all her energy, her usefulness and cleverness, there had been some mistakes in her past way of life, and that it would be better to face the truth however painful, than to go on blinding herself to it, and being indignant with her father for having found it out.

He, poor man, reproached *himself* only, and would fain have borne his little daughter's punishment for her, but it could not be. He had found out in her illness, how completely conceit and self-confidence had warped the poor child's mind, and could not marvel that she had failed under the burden, which she had been trying to bear in her own strength, and though he laid all the fault on himself, he was much too conscientious not to attempt to repair it even by means which might be painful to his darling. And although he could not yield to her so blindly as before, he did not love her one whit less fondly, so there was hope that the slight estrangement which had arisen between them would pass off, and that both father and daughter would soon be happier together than they had ever been, because more *one* in aim and feeling.





CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Yet to be loved makes not to love again."

Idyls of the King.

MRS. ROSS was at home, though not in the drawing-room, and the servant begged Gyneth to sit down, and said he would call her. It was a dusky afternoon, and Gyneth did not perceive that a tall, dark figure was stretched out on the sofa, until suddenly a head was raised, and a well-known voice said, "Miss Deshon! what a shame that I should let you find me here! but Mrs. Ross has been doctoring me for a headache, and I had actually fallen asleep." Even as he spoke, Mr. Armstrong sprang to his feet, and came forward to shake hands, looking rather sleepy and bewildered, and with all his fair curls tumbled about.

"I am sorry I was the means of waking you," said Gyneth, apologetically, though smiling; "a little sleep would have done your head good perhaps."

"Oh, it is nothing; but I have just come back from London, I took my sister up there this morning, and we talked all the way, and what between the rattle and noise of the train and of my own

chatter, I got such a ridiculous overpowring headache, that I was good for nothing till Mrs. Ross doctored me. What a kind little creature she is! I don't think Angela will ever forget her."

" You will miss your sister very much," said Gyneth.

" Yes, indeed; and yet I rather hurried her away, her pretty little head was getting quite turned, everybody made so much of her :" then as Gyneth was silent, wondering whether he were alluding to Anthony, he went on : " Miss Deshon, do you think I was unkind to send her back to the dull schoolroom and the strict governess ? she thought me so, poor little woman ! and reproached me very bitterly this morning, and then when I talked to her and explained my reasons, it only made her cry. I suppose I was not gentle enough with her, but indeed I tried not to be harsh."— At this juncture Gyneth very nearly laughed, for Mr. Armstrong was almost weakly good-natured, — " I have always thought it so unmanly to make a woman or a child cry, and I have never done it in my life before. I declare I feel myself quite a brute to-day !" and in the excitement of his feelings he passed his hands through his hair and rumped it up more oddly than before.

" But you know," said Gyneth, smiling, " women's and children's tears are rather unreasonable things very often ; I don't think the having caused them is a proof of cruelty, and I daresay by this time your sister is quite consoled, and ready to acknowledge that you were right."

" You think so ! ah, then I am sure I was," said Mr. Armstrong, delightedly ; " you see Angela is such a child, she could not quite understand my reasons, but it was much better she should go, for there were one or two men here who made her youth an excuse for flirting with her outrageously,

and Mrs. Ross thought it was all fun, and never interfered."

"So you had to do all the chaperoning."

"Yes, and it did not come well from me, Angela complained that I was cross, and the Rosses told her that I was prejudiced against your cousin, as perhaps I am, so she would not let me warn her against accepting his attentions."

"I am sorry that Anthony should have given you any annoyance," said Gyneth, with her eyes down, as if she herself had been the culprit.

"Oh, it is not very serious, he is so boyish and my sister so childish, that no one can suppose it will be more than a mere passing fancy. I could find it in me to be amused at the thought that Waller was surprised into admiration of *my* sister, only for her sake I am rather sorry it has happened so, for I'm afraid it will confirm her in the expectation of delightfully romantic intimacies with aristocratic heroes, which she has drawn from novels, and will make her dissatisfied with the society of her own proper sphere."

"I wonder the strict governess allows of novel-reading."

"I don't suppose she does; I fancy my little sisters indulge in such books by stealth,—ah, I see you are shocked, and no wonder, I have tried to make Angela feel how wrong it is, but poor children, they are so much left to themselves, and their principles so much at the mercy of each successive governess. Mrs. Armstrong is a great invalid, and my father is very little at home. If they only had some wise lady-friend, some one whom they could thoroughly love and admire, and who would be able to influence them!"

"A sort of Miss Boyd," said Gyneth, "I don't think any one could help being influenced by her, she is so very good and so thoroughly pleasant too."

"I daresay, but I—I was not thinking of Miss Boyd," faltered the young officer in confusion,—Gyneth began to wish Mrs. Ross would make her appearance,—“Miss Deshon, one great reason of my wishing to have Angela here was that she might know you, and perhaps the greatest disappointment connected with her visit has been, that though you have been always very kind when she has met you, she has seen so very little of you.”

“I have been a good deal occupied with my brother; and besides, I could not guess that Miss Armstrong would care for my acquaintance,” answered Gyneth, blushing; “what can have become of Mrs. Ross?”

“Ah, yes,” looking round in a bewildered way, “but I cannot be sorry that chance has brought me this opportunity of speaking to you alone. Miss Deshon, I had resolved not to trouble you with any expression of my—of the—of what I feel and have felt for you this long time past, but hopes will linger even when they have no right to do so, and—”

Before Gyneth could find words to check him, he was in the midst of a proposal, so humbly and generously expressed that a pang seized her at the thought that nothing but entire rejection awaited this honest love. If she had ever felt flattered at his preference she did not feel so now, but rather grieved and a little frightened, not knowing what to say, and afraid of wounding him; she wished for her mother as a child might have done, and when he ceased speaking, answered childishly and timidly enough, “Oh, please don’t say any more; I am very sorry, it seems very unkind, but I can’t say what you wish, I can only beg you not to care for me; I am not worth it.”

He had expected severe dignity, and perhaps this timid confusion gave him hope, for he said,

"At least I have not offended you, and, Miss Deshon, will you let me hope that in time, at some future day—" then as he saw "no" in her face he hurried on, "I know so well how your heart is set on doing good, how you only need opportunity to devote yourself nobly to works of charity for the poor, that I have sometimes fancied to myself that you would let me be your helper. You should have all that I can give; time, and money, and perfect freedom, and thorough sympathy; I would never be a hindrance to you in anything."

"Oh, but it wouldn't be right!" she interrupted, hastily; "how could I take all, and give nothing?"

"But you would give me all I ask, leave to love you, to be with you, to help you, to shield you from all contradiction, all harshness! Miss Deshon," in a plaintive, boyish tone, comic even, though touching, "*I would never prevent your having classes for the soldiers' wives.*"

No, she knew he would not; the free use of his wealth, unbounded indulgence, blind admiration, and most tender love, these were what he offered her; and perhaps to her vanity, to her longing to be loved and petted, and still more to her ambition of large schemes of good, there was some temptation in the offer. But she never thought of accepting it, and with a half smile at his quaint allusion to the soldiers' wives, she said, "Mr. Armstrong, you would be only too good to me, I know, and I am very, *very* much obliged to you, but indeed it cannot be. You must not regret for me that I meet with some little contradictions in my home—though I scarcely know how you have discovered this—every one must expect those, and as it is, I am only too much spoilt." Then, speaking eagerly, "Although I have seemed so ungrateful to you, I am going to ask you still to be my friend.

Thank you so much for the sympathy you have shown with my wish to do something for the poor here, I know it is because you feel the same that you have been able to sympathise so kindly, and I hope you will let me rejoice in what you accomplish, although I am not able to help you."

He leant his head down on his hands, the poor head which now ached worse than ever, and said gloomily, "You might have made something of me; without you I shall probably blunder on and do nothing."

"Oh, no, no! indeed you will have better help than mine!" she said earnestly, tears springing to her eyes in her fear that the rejected love might do him harm, him to whom she would fain have done nothing but good, so well did she like him, though she could not love him.

He looked up, met the sweet pitiful glance of those wet eyes, and longed inexpressibly to ask her why she so absolutely refused him, and if it were because her love were already given to another. But to the credit of his generosity be it spoken, he restrained himself, and was silent; if she had been engaged, probably she would have told him so frankly, and to entrap her into an avowal of a love which she wished to keep secret, seemed to him so dishonourable and unfair towards her, that he would rather suffer the torments of uncertainty than make any such attempt. "I think I had better be going home," he said, "shall I call the servant, and ask him what detains Mrs. Ross? and then when she comes, will you tell her, please, that my headache is very obstinate, and that I am going to keep quiet in my quarters for the rest of the day, and nurse it."

"Yes, I will tell her; I am so sorry you are suffering."

"Thank you, it doesn't matter," and he drew up

his head with a touch of pride,—which she rather admired,—as if pity were the last thing he wanted from her. Then they shook hands silently, and he went away.

And Gyneth left alone, thought, “was I wrong ? oh no, surely not, I never could have loved him as he deserves, never could have looked up to him as one ought to one’s husband ; and yet I do reverence his goodness and unselfishness, and he is quite my superior in all real worth, why is it that I cannot feel towards him as such ? I suppose because there is something childish about him, and he will mount me up on a pinnacle and defer to me, and want me to govern ; that should not be the way ; Lewis would never speak so to Rose, *he* knows that it is *his* right to govern, he would never have spoken to any woman as Mr. Armstrong has spoken to me to-day.” Then self-reproachfully, “Why am I always contrasting other people with Lewis ? it is very absurd of me, why should I expect or want them to be like him ? there are different sorts of goodness ; and yet I can’t help it, I fall into it quite involuntarily. Lewis ! I am very glad to have known you so well ; I am very proud of your friendship, and of the happy old days in which you let me see more and more of your real self, but you have spoilt all other men for me, that is the truth !” A pause, during which she did not think, but only felt, then slowly to herself, “I am not sorry, I hope I may gain some new friends, though never any that I can honour quite so much ; and I daresay there will never be any need for me to do anything so painful again as what I have done to-day. Poor Mr. Armstrong ! I hope he will soon get over it ; I am not worth being cared about or remembered, and he will meet some one better. Ah !” aloud, as Mrs. Ross entered the room, “I was just meditating a retreat, Pho-

tinée ; I am afraid that you are engaged, and that I have interrupted you."

"Not one bit ! I am so sorry to have seemed so rude, but I thought Frank would talk to you, and that when he told you my little brothers were here—"

"Are they ? Oh, he never told me that."

" Didn't he ? Ah, the great stupid man ! but I suppose his headache made him forgetful. Yes, they came about an hour ago, and just when you arrived, I had had a sort of late lunch sent up for them, and they were so ravenous, the creatures ! and they would have no one but sister to carve for them, so that I could not get away. You will pardon it ?" and she kissed Gyneth on both cheeks, and looked irresistibly tender and bewitching.

"Oh I am only so sorry to have taken you away from them now. Has your elder brother come too ?"

"No, he has gone to join Garibaldi ! Yes, indeed, I am not joking, my Marco is now one of those wild fellows in red shirts, whom you sober-minded English people laugh at. Never mind, it is all for liberty !" and she began to hum "Liberta, liberta," her dark eyes flashing into fierceness, and then breaking into smiles again. "Anastatius ! Stephanos !" she called, opening the door as she spoke, "come, mes petits braves, my little grasshoppers, come and show yourselves !" and two thin, brown-faced little boys, indescribably lithe and graceful in their movements, and with large stag-like brown eyes, responded to the call.

"They are to go to school, the monkeys !" said the sister fondling them, "and they must be very good, for the English masters will not be troubled with bad little boys without manners ; but oh, they will be so happy at school, and I have got such a nice friend for them, such a jolly boy,—can

you say 'jolly,' my kittens?—who goes to the same school."

"I do not want to go to school," said Stephanos with the deliberate manner of one speaking a language not his own.

"Oh, hush! you will have a nice little holiday, and then you will go to school like good dear boys. Frederick says it is to be so, and I must have all done exactly as he says, he knows what is best for us, and he must always be obeyed; do you understand, Stephanos? Ah, there he is coming up the steps!" and she flew to open the door for him, crying, "Frederico, Frederico mio! my little ones are come, they are here!" while the two little boys whispered together in their own tongue, somewhat alarmed apparently at the prospect of the brother-in-law who was always to be obeyed.

One glance at those kindly blue eyes, and the small Greeks were reassured, there was nothing very dreadful to be feared from the owner of that most amiable of faces, and Anastatius had proffered a kiss, and Stephanos had climbed on to the young officer's knee, before they had been two minutes together. Such a happy quartette did the husband and wife and the two little brothers make, that Gyneth thought herself only in the way, and bidding them a cordial good-bye—resisting a most pressing invitation from both Captain and Mrs. Ross to stay and dine with them,—went back to the rectory, to wait till the carriage should be sent to fetch her home.

When she arrived at home, she found a letter deeply-bordered with black, and addressed to her, lying on the drawing-room mantelpiece, and no sooner had she taken it in her hand, than she exclaimed, "From Rose! what can have happened? I'm afraid Mr. Burnaby—"

Lambert looked up as though he shared her anxiety, and she hastened to tear open the envelope, but the first few lines completely puzzled her. They ran thus—

"**MY OWN DARLING GYNETH,**—I was not allowed to tell you of my happiness, much as I longed for your sympathy, but I feel that I must turn to you in my sorrow, and I am sure *he* would not be displeased with me for doing so, for in his great tenderness he took thought for my comfort even in the last solemn hours. He died yesterday morning. I can't write about it; dear kind Mrs. Deshon will tell you all the particulars; you will have learnt from her letter of yesterday what this loss is to *me*, only I don't think she or any one can quite tell how great my grief is, because they don't know how terribly it is mingled with self-reproach."

So far Gyneth read in utter bewilderment. "She can't surely mean Lewis!" she faltered with white lips, "it seems grandmamma did write, but I have never received the letter." Then she turned the page, and read on, but still there was no solution of the terrible doubt, and the words seemed to swim before her eyes.

"Then it is not Mr. Burnaby?" said Lambert, and as she shook her head, and he saw how great was the agitation she was trying to control, he ran across to the dining-room, and returned with a glass of water and the supplement of "*The Times*" of that day. "It may be here," he said, glancing down the record of deaths, "yes, this must be it,—'On the 8th inst., of diphtheria, the Rev. Samuel Leonard Willis, in the 45th year of his age.' Was he related to the Burnabys?"

"No, no, I can't understand. Oh, here is something about 'our engagement,' and on the last page I see Mr. Willis's name. Poor Rose! I

will read it all directly. Thank you, Bertie," as he handed her the water, and still trembling she sat down.

"What made you think it was Lewis?" said Lambert, watching her anxiously.

"Because I thought—mamma said there was evidently something between Lewis and Rose, and this letter begins about her 'not having been allowed to tell me of her happiness,' and I thought that meant her engagement to him. I never could have dreamt she cared for Mr. Willis, oh, I am so sorry for her!"

"Yes, poor thing! one does not know how to fancy her in sorrow, she was so very bright. But—Gyneth, you have mistaken Lewis very strangely!" She did not wish to ask how, nor to try to understand what Lambert meant, her colour went and came, and her heart beat fast, but she took up the letter again, and tried to think only of Rose and the sad tidings contained therein.

"How I wish I could go to her!" she said at last, "my poor little Rose! it is grievous to think of her, so lonely in her sorrow, for Mr. Burnaby though so kind and good is not the sort of person who can enter into a girl's feelings much, and Rose I know will do her best to seem cheerful with him. Fortunately she has grandmamma to comfort her. Dear Granny! What can it be that has prevented my getting her letter?"

"Perhaps the servants forgot to post it, you may get it this evening. Here is mamma coming; is what Miss Burnaby has told you a secret?"

"No, no, she says she is proud to have belonged to anyone so good, and I think she quite wishes her engagement to be known. I wonder why she was not allowed to tell me of it before; she must have been engaged some months, I suppose, from what she says."

Gyneth was not sorry to find that her mother already knew the tidings contained in Rose's letter, with the addition of some further particulars. "Yes, papa heard from Major Willis this afternoon," Mrs. Deshon explained; "he wishes, very naturally, to remain with his mother till after the funeral, and then hopes to persuade her to come with him to Harbourmouth for a time. It seems she is very much overcome, she had thought her son was only suffering from a common sore-throat, and did not think—any more than he, poor man!—of calling in medical assistance, till it was too late to be of any use. Rose Burnaby has devoted herself to her most affectionately, and I think you would be pleased to see in what high terms the dry Major writes of your friend, Gyneth, though he says he always considered his brother's engagement a mistake, and believes it would have been proved to be so, had it not met with this sad and unexpected close."

"But, oh, mamma, Rose would make any man happy, and I do believe she really loved Mr. Willis," said Gyneth, earnestly, "anyone would think so if they could see how she writes of him."

"Yes, I dare say, but there was a great disparity in their age, and he was a grave dull sort of man, wasn't he? She would not have found it necessary to amuse herself with Lewis Grantham if she had been perfectly happy in her engagement."

"Mamma!" Gyneth's white lips unclosed pleadingly, but she could find no words to continue: Lambert spoke for her.

"I suspect Lewis was one of the few people who were aware of the engagement, and that *that* was the reason why Miss Burnaby could talk more freely to him than to others. I see now why she was so confused at my suggesting Leonard when

she was playing with the children at that absurd game, 'I love my love with an L,' and why Lewis was so anxious to help her out of her difficulty. I suppose she was accustomed to call Mr. Willis by his second name."

"And that accounts for the L on her locket too!" said Mrs. Deshon, "*I always thought it stood for Lewis, didn't you, Bertie?*"

"No, I had no reason to think so, mother," he answered gravely, and something in his steady glance seemed to imply so plainly "nor had you either, really," that her eyes fell before his. And then he looked infinitely ashamed, poor boy, at this result, and thought he had been wanting in respect, but his sister had reason to be grateful to him, for from that time forward Mrs. Deshon made no more inuendoes on the subject of Lewis' and Rose's intimacy. She accepted that one mute involuntary rebuke from her son, as she was wont to accept others of the same kind from her husband,—who never suffered a word of reproach to escape him, and whose blame could be read only in his first look of grief and surprise,—and really liked him the better for it; it was her nature to love the best those who could govern her, and though with such a dutiful son as Lambert the outward submission was sure to be on his side, in secret she acknowledged his superiority, and was far more really influenced by him than he had ever been by her.

When Mrs. Deshon and her daughter were next alone, Gyneth took the opportunity to tell of Mr. Armstrong's proposal and of the answer she had given to it; she felt this confidence was due to her mother, though it was one which she found rather disagreeable to make, more particularly as she could not be sure beforehand how it would be received.

"So you gave him an absolute 'no,' poor fellow!" was Mrs. Deshon's first remark. "Was it before or after you received Rose Burnaby's letter?"

"Oh, before," answered Gyneth, wonderingly, not seeing that this had anything to do with the matter.

"Then you refused him—why? Because he is a parvenu, and the idea of such a close connection with the button-trade frightened you? or because he personally does not please you, or what? I always thought you liked him very much."

"So I do, mamma; but still I never could love him well enough to be happy as his wife. I shall be much, *much* happier at home with you, if you will let me stay. You are not in such a great hurry to get rid of me, are you?"

"Did I seem so?" said her mother, kissing her. "My love, I don't want any Mr. Armstrong to carry you off from us. I should like to have you to myself for a long time to come, only parents mustn't be selfish about these matters. And if this marriage had seemed likely to be for your happiness, I should certainly never have opposed it, though it is not quite the connection I desire for you."

"Will you please tell papa for me?" said Gyneth. "I don't think anyone else need know, need they? except—I have always told granny everything that concerns me, hitherto."

"And of course granny will tell Lewis Grantham," reflected Mrs. Deshon, discontentedly. Aloud she said, "My dear, you must do as you think right, but the less said about these matters the better; it is not fair towards Mr. Armstrong to mention your refusal of him to anyone unnecessarily. If grandmamma should ever question you on the subject, you could explain it all to her then."

Gyneth felt as though suspected of a conceited wish to bruit abroad Mr. Armstrong's proposal; and, fearful of deserving in any way this imputation, and still more, of seeming unmindful of her mother's advice, acquiesced in the reserve thus enjoined on her, hoping that she was not wronging her grandmother by this absolute obedience to her mother.

Yet Lewis Grantham did come to know of the refusal after all, for Mrs. Deshon herself mentioned it in a letter to Jeannie, who was sojourning a day or two in London on her way to the north; and Lewis happening to go with Jeannie and her husband to the railway-station to see them off, seized the opportunity of a tête-à-tête with his cousin, while Alfred was engaged in seeing the luggage properly ticketed, to ask after Gyneth, and received, as answer to his half-satirically, half-sadly put question, "Mr. Armstrong devoted as usual, I suppose?" the unexpected intelligence, "Oh, poor man, his attentions have been suddenly put a stop to; he proposed the other day, and Gyneth refused him."

Mr. Grantham did not even say, "Oh!" he merely proceeded to inquire in the same satirical tone, "Not for the sake of the gentle Anthony, I hope?" To which Jeannie answered, almost impatiently, "Oh, how could you suppose such a thing? Dear mamma in her kind-heartedness has managed to be fond of Anthony; but I don't think any of the rest of us have ever been able to do more than tolerate him; and besides, he has been quite taken up lately with little Miss Armstrong."

Mr. Grantham did say, "Oh!" this time, but said it so drily, as to afford no intimation of any peculiar pleasure or relief; and yet, brown eyes, you sparkled more saucily and brightly than ever

under those dark brows of his, as he wended his way back to his law books, and the smile in which those firm lips parted now and then, was surely not produced by anything contained in the crabbed-looking sheets of parchment, over which he pored so industriously for the remainder of that day.





CHAPTER XXXIV.

"This rapture . . . selfish can it be?
Eject it from your heart, her home. It stays!
Ah, the brave world that opens on us both!"

ROBERT BROWNING.

MRS. Willis *did* come to Harbourmouth about three weeks after her son's death, and took up her abode for a while in a furnished house on the Common; and, somewhat to the surprise of the Deshons, she brought Rose with her; for, though the poor girl would much have preferred remaining quietly in her home with her good old father, she could not resist Mrs. Willis's urgent entreaties, and believed that she was making the best and only atonement in her power to her dead love, for having sometimes slighted his wishes, by scrupulously fulfilling his last-expressed desire, that she would try to soothe his mother's sorrow, and lead her to the truest source of comfort.

Poor Mrs. Willis! there was something very piteous in her grief, for she had but ill requited the dutiful love of her good son; and yet she was not so hardened in selfishness as to be impervious to the stings of the deep self-reproach which his sudden death had awakened in her. Her better feelings struggled with her old frivolous worldly

thoughts and ways, and were always uppermost in Rose's presence ; for Rose, though at times led away by giddiness and a childish love of amusement, was at heart thoroughly sincere, and simple, and earnest : and Rose believed in the better part of her friend's character, and addressed herself always to that, never taking upon herself to exhort or advise,—which would ill have become one so young and so full of faults,—but doing all she could by means of gentle suggestion and loving persuasion. It was a grave task which her betrothed had imposed on her ; and in striving to fulfil it she gained wisdom and thoughtfulness every day. Gyneth's first impression on seeing her was that she had grown years older in the months which had passed since they had last met. Not that she looked really old, or worn, or ill ; the roseate-tinted face, the sunny hair, the brilliant, changeful hazel eyes, only looked all the brighter and fresher from contrast with the sombre hue of her mourning garments ; and tears had not quenched the childlike smile that rippled over her lips as frankly as ever, when anything moved her to momentary mirth. There was not in her one particle of that affectation which takes a lugubrious delight in giving to grief its most pensive outward show, which sighs unnecessarily, and speaks in plaintive accents, that all men may see the extent of its affliction. Her deep, honest grief lay heavy at her heart, and forced many tears from her when she was alone ; but it had not made her incapable of being interested or cheered, or even amused at times, and she would not pretend that it had. She was very glad indeed to see Gyneth, evidently ; and though a certain soft seriousness, a grave and gentle dignity, was now observant in her, and made her, as has been said, seem older than before, her interest in all her friend's affairs

was as ready as ever, and she talked of Lambert and Lawrence, of Augusta Weatherhead and the schools, and the poor people, with as vivid a remembrance of what Gyneth's hopes and fears had been when she was last at Harbournouth, as if nothing of greater importance to herself had occurred since then.

But when Gyneth and she at length found themselves alone together, she let her sorrow have its way for a while, expressing it freely, as was in her frank, confiding nature to do, to one whom she loved and trusted so thoroughly, yet never exaggerating it, nor rejecting such consolation as Gyneth could offer.

"He was so good to me, and I was so bad to him—that is the bitterest part of my regret," she said sadly and humbly. "I don't mean that I was wilfully unkind or unmindful, but I used to laugh when he wanted me to be serious, and to go gadding about when he would much rather I had stayed at home. Instead of letting myself be drawn up to him, as I ought, I tried to pull him down to me."

"I don't think his influence has been wasted on you, indeed, Rosie," said Gyneth, tenderly.

"No, I hope not. But it is the losing him that has deepened it; and now he can never know—I can never make up for the past."

Great sobs choked her voice, and the flushed, tear-wet face was hidden away on Gyneth's shoulder. Presently she went on, "He did not like that expedition to Brittany; it was undertaken quite against his advice, and you know it turned out badly for papa. I wanted to go, because what Mr. Grantham had told me of Brittany had inspired me with a great wish to see it; and in my self-will I thought papa would enjoy it too. There was no thought of your cousin's joining us

when we set off; but before we had been many days in the country, we were obliged to stop at a horrid little inn, where there was nothing to be got, and papa was so unwell, I was quite frightened. So when I was looking out of the window one afternoon, and saw Mr. Grantham drive up, I could not help calling to him; and after that he travelled with us as far as we went, and was, oh, so kind and useful. Our journeyings would have been nothing but misery and anxiety to me, but for him; for papa was so ill, and yet would not turn back at first, because he thought I wanted to go on."

"I am so glad Lewis came to your assistance," said Gyneth, with genuine pleasure.

"Yes, I shall always be grateful to him; but still trouble came of it in some ways. Major Willis heard of it, and said ill-natured things about it to Leonard, and made him unhappy, though he could not make him unjust. And then you know, I knew that Mr. Willis was vexed with me for persisting in going to Brittany, and that he would be still more vexed when he found it had done papa harm, just as he had predicted; and so I could not write as happily and freely to him as usual: and, putting this and that together, he fancied I was tired of our engagement, and the first thing he did after I came home was to offer to release me from it."

"Oh, how grieved you must have been!"

"Yes, I was indeed, but it did me good; it made me more careful, and less eager for the amusement of the minute. I don't think I have ever made any approach to flirting since then. He forgave me for the past, and I started fresh, and tried hard to please him, so that I think he was beginning to feel that I did really love him; though he would never let me publish my engage-

ment to him, lest I should wish to change my mind, and should be fettered by the thought of what people would say of me."

"Oh, Rosie, he might have trusted you!" said Gyneth, almost indignantly.

"Yes, and I think he did at last; but he was so humble, he did not know how to believe that any one could really care for him. I don't think he would ever have found confidence enough to ask me to marry him, if Mr. Grantham had not encouraged him."

"Then Lewis knew of your engagement?"

"Oh, yes; he was one of the few people who did. Leonard and he were great friends, and he was the first person who discovered Leonard's love for me, and the only person who was really admitted into his confidence. Do you know, it is very wicked of me, but I never can quite forgive Major Willis for having put it into his brother's head to be uneasy about Mr. Grantham and me, though I am trying hard to like him and forgive him, for Leonard's sake."

Poor Gyneth was terribly tortured by all these allusions to Lewis, especially as Rose's words almost made it seem as though there had been some flirting in the case, after all, though nothing more serious; and yet she was tongue-tied and would not ask an explanation, but could only listen and wait, in the hopes of its being given unasked.

Rose was crying quietly, and it was some time before she spoke again: then it was to say, "Gyneth, do you know, of all the letters I have received since my loss has been known,—and papa has told all my friends, by my desire, what Mr. Willis was to me,—none have been anything like so comforting to me as yours and Mr. Grantham's; and, curiously enough, you and he have

said one or two things almost the same, and even nearly in the same words, though the great reason that *his* letter was so welcome to me was, that he is sorrowing, not only for *my* loss, but for his own : he really loved and honoured Leonard as his own friend."

Was it possible to hear that, and yet believe that Lewis had been willing to flirt with his friend's betrothed ? But Gyneth was perplexed, and did not answer otherwise than by a pressure of the hand she held in hers ; and her silence made Rose look up.

" You don't mind Mr. Grantham's having written to me, do you ? " she said, pleadingly. " I am sure you will be prouder of him than ever when you have read that letter. I brought it with me to Harbournouth on purpose to show it to you."

She drew it from her pocket as she spoke, and insisted on Gyneth's reading it, watching her face as she read, to see if she were pleased with it. There could scarcely be any doubt of that ; it was one of those beautiful letters which sincere, warm-hearted people write when their feelings are deeply moved,—with no studied phrases, and yet no incoherences, showing that the writer was accustomed to express himself well and naturally, and that he had neither the over-shyness which hinders many from giving words to the sympathy they feel, nor the vanity which makes others obtrude it, as if *their* sympathy must needs be worth a great deal.

Gyneth's eyes were full of happy pride when she gave it back. Lewis *was* what her ideal had pictured him ; she would never doubt him more, let poor Rose's words be as puzzling as they might.

A week was the utmost that Rose could spare to Mrs. Willis just then, as her father was all alone at home, and wanted her back ; so, though the

two girls had passed as much time together as they could, during that week, they were neither of them ready to part when the last day came, and Rose preferred a very eager petition to Colonel and Mrs. Deshon to allow Gyneth to return with her to ——, and stay a little while with her there. Gyneth would not have liked to press for this, as, from Lambert having gone back to college, and Lawrence being at Woolwich, her mother seemed to need her companionship more than usual ; but Mrs. Deshon liked Rose, and thought that a visit from Gyneth would help to cheer her, and the Colonel was glad of this opportunity of Gyneth's having a glimpse at her grandmother.

"I'm afraid that grandmamma is being rather worried by her landlord," he said ; "the absurd man wants to pull down that good old house, and build a couple of wretched modern villas in its stead. I have asked her to let me go up to town for her, and see him on the subject, but I have not yet had any answer from her. Be sure you write me word how she is looking, and whether she seems much distressed at the possibility of her being obliged to leave her old home."

It was a possibility which distressed Gyneth very much ; and as soon as she had received Mr. Burnaby's hospitable greetings, and partaken of the refreshment he had provided, she begged leave to go at once and see her grandmother, promising to return before evening. She rather enjoyed the notion of taking the dear old lady by surprise, and ran blithely up the steps of the old red house, whose destruction she could not bear to contemplate, forgetting all anxiety in the pleasurable thought that in another moment she would be in her grandmamma's arms.

Eliza opened the door, with surprise and something like dismay depicted on her face.

"Eh, Miss Gyneth, and where have ye come from?" she said. "I'm right glad to see you; but my mistress is up in London, and not likely to be back till to-morrow."

"In London!" exclaimed Gyneth, in intense astonishment; for, of all things, her grandmother hated a railway journey. "Why, what is the matter?"

"It's something about the house, I think, miss; the landlord's been real bothersome lately, and Mr. Grantham thought as my mistress had better see him herself; and he wouldn't come here, so Mr. Grantham came and fetched my mistress up to town this morning. But won't ye come in? Anne can get your room ready for you in no time, and I'll soon get something hot cooked for your dinner."

Gyneth explained that she was Miss Burnaby's guest, and required neither to be housed nor fed, but went in for a minute to speak a kind word to Anne and take a peep at her canary, and then said she should like to take one turn round the Convent garden, and went thither accordingly.

The chill of disappointment was still upon her, and she was unhappy at the seeming likelihood of her grandmother's being obliged to leave her dear old home. "I wonder where granny will go to?" pondered she, "how I wish I could think she would come to us! I know papa would like it," and sitting down on the mossy bank where she had sat and read "Christabel" that memorable day of her father's return, she fell into a day-dream engendered by this reflection.

Her own name, called in low yet distinct tones, was the first thing that startled her from her meditations, and was the more startling because in those tones, grave as they were, she recognised the blithe singing voice which had aroused her so

pleasantly on that May day of the year before. "I am here, Lewis," she answered, half-rising, and in another minute Mr. Grantham came through the trees and stood beside her.

"I did not expect to see *you*," was the remark of both simultaneously, and then both smiled, and Gyneth asked if her grandmamma had returned.

"No, oh no, I came down alone to find a letter that she wants, and the maids told me you were here; sit still, and I will tell you all about it, or would you rather come into the house?" Gyneth preferred remaining where she was, and Mr. Grantham proceeded to explain that Mrs. Deshon's personal remonstrance with her landlord had been without effect, except that he had seemed a little struck at hearing that she had in her possession a letter from his late father, her former landlord, promising that the house should not be altered while she was disposed to remain in it. "This letter I have now to search for," he added, "granny has entrusted to me the key of her Indian cabinet for that purpose, and I have persuaded her to remain with my friends, the Langdales, until to-morrow, as if this troublesome landlord is still recalcitrant, after he has read his father's letter,—and I fully expect he will be, for he is a most obstinate fellow,—I have another plan to propose to her."

"If grandmamma is obliged to leave her old home I hope she will come to us," said Gyneth, "I am sure papa would wish it."

He looked at her for a minute, as if he were very sorry for her, then turned away his head, and answered as indifferently as he could, "The plan has been thought of, but it wouldn't quite do. I must leave granny to explain it all to you."

"Then papa has proposed it? I didn't know that, he didn't tell me," said Gyneth, a little hurt

perhaps, at finding that she had been kept in ignorance of a matter so near her heart ; "and why wouldn't it do ? papa is likely to be settled in England for some time now, and I'm sure we would do all we could to make dear granny comfortable."

Mr. Grantham was embarrassed, he did not like to tell her the real reason why, which was—that granny felt the scheme was unwelcome to her daughter-in-law, and that therefore it would be unwise and unadvisable to accept her son's proposal, however much he might urge it, and however tempting for *his* sake such a scheme might appear.

The explanation would not have come well from Lewis, and he did not attempt to give it, but with great sweetness and kindness of manner answered, "I dare not take upon myself to explain the whys and the wherefores, but I am going to ask you to be so generous, Gyneth, as to believe me that that plan has not been set aside without reason, and to help me to persuade the dear granny to consent to what *I* have to propose."

"But Lewis, I can't help being sorry, and I don't understand it at all," though a misgiving that her mother had not favoured the plan had risen slowly in her mind, and would not be smothered, "I don't want to be selfish, but you can't think what a disappointment this is to me."

"Can't I ? Have I grown so stupid where you are concerned then ?" he rejoined, in a tone which made her heart beat, so deep a feeling trembled beneath its gentle modulations ; then in his more ordinary manner he went on, "I am not unmindful of your disappointment indeed, but I want you to be so good and patient as to listen to me a little while. There is a certain house in a quiet street,—albeit a London one,—near the Park, and with a glimpse of grass and green trees from the win-

dows, an old home-like looking house, roomy and comfortable, though with no pretensions to grandeur, and this house, be it observed, appertains to me. It is part of the little property which I inherited from my father. I have let it hitherto, but the last tenant has just gone away, and it has occurred to me that, instead of letting it again, I should like to inhabit it, and that in that case granny might be induced to make her home with me."

"Have you proposed it to her yet?" inquired Gyneth, in a constrained voice.

"I have, and she has agreed to look at the house, and seemed half inclined to consent, if your father does not object. I promised when I had found the letter I would go on to Harbournouth and see him this evening, and broach the idea; from what he said in a letter I received from him yesterday, I do not expect that he will make any objection."

"Of course he will wish as I do, that grandmamma should choose what will be the happiest for herself, and I know how good you will be to her, but oh, Lewis,"—and tears sprang to her eyes, "you are taking from me the one person whom I thought most completely mine, whom I should most have delighted to treasure and serve, and devote myself to, all through her dear life! How can I help being sorry?"

He did not immediately respond to the appeal. "Am I selfish?" he asked himself, "would this, in bringing me so great a joy, bring any comfort to her? at least she shall know what a welcome there *would* be for her if—" He dared not linger over the probabilities on which his dearest earthly hope hung, but spoke aloud. "I only know of one remedy,"—again that intense sweetness of look and tone!—"come too, Gyneth!"

She glanced up at him, and something in his

face, something in his voice, something in his eager outstretched hands, pointed the meaning of this most unexpected answer, told her what sort of coming it was to be. She felt no fear, no pain, no shrinking, as when Mr. Armstrong had declared his love; even through her great surprise thrilled a strange sense of rest, a joy which she hardly had time to realise, a feeling that she was indeed "going home," in giving herself up to Lewis, and promising to be his wife.





CHAPTER XXXV.

"Mine, my own, without doubts or terrors,
With all thy goodnesses, all thy errors,
Unto me, and to me alone, revealed
—'A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.'—
Many may praise thee—praise mine as thine,
Many may love thee—I'll love them too;
But thy heart of hearts, pure, faithful, and true,
Must be mine, mine wholly, and only mine."

From Poems by the author of John Halifax.

"AND so you are going to marry Mr. Grantham!" exclaimed Rose Burnaby one afternoon, as she hovered affectionately round Gyneth, who was sitting musing over a letter which she had received early that morning, and some of the contents of which she had just communicated to her friend.

"Yes, but not now, not till the autumn, you know, Rosie; it seems so strange to have that to look forward to, when I had quite made up my mind that I never should marry at all!"

And then, fearful lest the discussion of her happy prospects might jar upon the poor little Rose, Gyneth put away Lewis's letter and took up a book. But Rose was by no means inclined to quit the

subject so abruptly. "Strange?" she said, smiling, "I should have thought you would have found it the most natural thing in the world. Why Mr. Grantham and you have always seemed to belong to one another, and that was what used to make me so comfortable in talking to him; the feeling, I mean, that he was as completely yours as if he had been ticketed with a great 'G,' and that he could not possibly suspect me of wishing to captivate him."

"Then," said Gyneth, timidly, "you were not alluding to him when you said something about flirtation the other day?"

"No, no; how could you suppose so? Major Willis chose to accuse me of flirting with him, but it was quite a mistake; there never was anything more than kindly unembarrassed intimacy either on his side or mine; he knew my secret and I knew his, that was the bond between us, and when we talked together apart it was always of either Leonard or you. Those with whom I flirted were strangers, pleasant men whom I met casually, and with whom it was great fun to amuse myself for an hour or two, knowing that nothing serious was meant on either side,—at least, certainly not on mine,"—and she blushed hotly, as if at some sudden recollection; "but I was wrong, Leonard did not like it, and it wasn't right or nice of me. I am very sorry now."

"I oughtn't to have reminded you," said Gyneth, with great compunction.

"Yes, you ought; and I'm glad you did; I shouldn't like *you*, of all people, to be under any mistake about Mr. Grantham's kindness towards me. I know you seemed a little puzzled at his talking so much to me that day at Harbournouth when the colours were presented; but you see he took refuge with me because he could talk *about*

you, and that comforted him a little, for not being able to talk *to* you. Ah, you look astonished; but don't you know that your mother gave him a hint not to engross you? and besides, he had got all sorts of nonsensical ideas in his head about its being ungenerous to try and claim you as his own when there were others who might make you happier, and whom you might be able to love better. And then he thought he was too old for you, such nonsense! Why Leonard was seven or eight years older."

"Yes, I can't see that the difference in age is an objection, it makes me look up to him the more, and that is what I like; only perhaps if I were older I might be a better wife for him, not quite so ignorant and foolish."

"Ignorant! hum! I suspect you would be too learned and grave for many men, though not for Mr. Grantham. Gyneth, my little, wise, clever darling, I am so glad you are going to be with some one who will appreciate you. I am so happy in thinking how happy you will be."

"Rosie, you are *too* kind," said Gyneth, her eyes filling with tears; "it is so very good and generous of you to rejoice with me in this way; but I don't like you to make such an effort."

"It is not an effort," said Rose, who was seated on the ground at Gyneth's feet: "why shouldn't I be happy still in the happiness of other people; above all, of *his* friend; and of you, who are like my own sister? Don't refuse to let me share your joy, Gyneth; you don't know what good it does me to see you sitting there, looking so happy and sweet;" and, turning round, she took fond possession of Gyneth's hands and stretched up her pretty white throat till their lips met in a kiss. Not in their days of brightest mirth and mischief had those hazel eyes, with their long curling

lashes, looked so bewitching as they did now, and it was with almost reverential love that Gyneth bent down and kissed the fair ingenuous face, so childlike in its dimpled sweetness that it seemed as though the shade which grief had left on it could not be an abiding cloud, but would pass off, leaving behind it indeed a graver serenity than heretofore, but no bitterness and no deep furrows of care.

"And now," said Rose, brightly, "there is a great deal more that I want to hear. Let me see, you said it was the day before yesterday that Mr. Grantham proposed to you, when you were sitting in the convent garden,—I like to think of its happening there, though I wonder the shades of the departed nuns didn't appear and shake their heads at you!—and then he went on to Harbournouth straightway, and asked your father's consent, and got it; and then he rushed up to town and sent the dear granny into fits of joy by his news, so that she forgot to be sorry when the crabbed old, or rather, young, landlord persisted in his resolution to pull down her house; and then he sent you a ridiculous little note of two or three lines, horribly scribbled, which made you very silent and confused all yesterday, and now he has written you a long, proper letter, and everything is comfortably settled? Well, then, so far I understand everything rightly; but now I want to know when your grandmamma is coming back, and how that dear pretty mamma of yours likes the match."

"Granny is coming back to-morrow; I don't think she would have stayed so long with the Langdales, only that Lewis has got some business in hand, and could not well spare the time to come down with her until Saturday; she says he has been obliged to work so hard to make up for the time he lost on Wednesday."

"I don't believe *he* calls that time lost; but now tell me what does your mamma say?"

"It is not a very long note, perhaps you would like me to read you some of it," said Gyneth, doubtful how to reply on this point. The note ran thus:—

"My dear love,—Papa wishes me to write and tell you that he has given his consent"—"full" was written above in Colonel Deshon's hand-writing—"to Lewis's proposal, and we both hope that you will be very happy. I suppose you are aware that he is not at all rich, but I daresay you like him all the better for that, and dear grandmamma's living with you will be a very nice arrangement and prevent your being lonely when Lewis is out, as of course he will be a great deal. I don't know how to forgive him for taking my child from me, but if you are happy I mustn't mind my own loss. I am glad it is not to be till the autumn, as that will leave you to me for a little while, and besides we shall have plenty of time to prepare your trousseau, and then Lewis will be at leisure to take you abroad somewhere for your wedding-trip, and that will be pleasant for you. Eddie and the girls join with me in congratulations; oddly enough, it was Lewis himself who told them of your engagement to him; he certainly is not a bashful lover, but I suppose he has got beyond the blushing age. Write to me very soon, like a dear, good child, and tell me when you are coming home; I miss you so much."

"Ever your very affectionate mother,
"FANNY DESHON."

Poor Gyneth, who certainly had not got beyond the blushing age, whatever her lover might have done, felt very hot and uncomfortable as she

read this letter for the second time, picking out bits here and there which were suitable for Rose to hear; and yet she was grateful for the affection her mother showed towards *her*, and tried to keep down her indignation on Lewis's account.

It was not without an effort that Mrs. Deshon had brought herself to write to her daughter at all, in the first shock of her dismay at finding that Lewis Grantham was after all to carry off the treasure she had been trying to guard from him so carefully. She had acquiesced in a long *tête-à-tête* between her husband and Lewis that Wednesday evening, believing that they were discussing schemes for influencing the refractory landlord, and hoping that thus her mother-in-law would be able to remain comfortably in her present home, and that all thoughts of the necessity of asking the old lady to take up her abode with them would thus be laid at rest. She did not dislike—how could she? the dear gentle grandmamma, but she very much disliked the influence Granny had over her husband, and was of too jealous a nature with regard to this one great love of hers, to bear the idea of sharing Edgar's attentions and Edgar's society even with his own mother. Nor yet did she want Lewis Grantham to make a home for Mrs. Deshon, for she thought then people would be sure to say that her husband ought to have done this, and not have left the care of his mother to a distant cousin, a young man, and with no wife or sisters to provide for the good old lady's comfort. Thus she continued to hope that the landlord would be brought round, until her reflections were suddenly interrupted by her husband's coming to her and telling her that Lewis had asked his leave to marry Gyneth, and that he had given it fully and freely. She was very much astonished, and anything but pleased, foresaw poverty and all sorts of trials for Gyneth, and was

not much comforted by Colonel Deshon's assurances that Lewis had laid before him a statement of his affairs, which showed that he had a fair though not a large income, and was rising in his profession and likely to be better off each year.

"He has neither rank, nor money, nor position, nor any one advantage that I can see! not even special good looks; though he is not positively ugly perhaps," said Mrs. Deshon, pettishly. Colonel Deshon would not debate the point of the personal appearance of his son-in-law-elect;—though *he* thought Lewis particularly good-looking,—but answered gravely, "He has no great worldly advantages certainly, Fanny, though he is a clever man, and one likely to rise I think, but in more important matters he is all that we could wish, and, having known him and been fond of him all his life, I can give our little girl to him with more pleasure than to any one else."

"I don't see any necessity for her marrying at all at present, she is so very young."

"There is no *necessity* for her marrying at any time, Fanny," rejoined her husband goodhumouredly, "but we mustn't be selfish where her happiness is concerned; she will be nineteen in August, and you don't think that too young, do you? at least you didn't think so when you married me, any more than you thought of caring that I had not rank, or wealth, or position, or even special good looks." His tone was so tender in its playfulness that his wife began to be mollified. "It was the best deed I ever did, Edgar," she said, smilingly, as he kissed her, "I had been brought up to think I was to make a grand match, but at the sight of a certain Lieutenant Deshon all my ambitious longings melted into air."

"Then why should you be more ambitious for your daughters?"

"Lewis is not you, so I can judge more dispas-

sionately, and besides I have grown old and worldly, you know, Edgar;" and she laughed, a laugh which somewhat jarred upon her husband. 'Old,' she certainly did not appear, as he stood there gazing at her, but rather most wonderfully youthful for a woman of forty-three, and almost as pretty as she had ever been; 'worldly,' he would not believe that either, and yet a momentary consciousness struck to his heart that on that point she had not accused herself altogether unjustly. He said nothing, only looked at her with such anxious grave tenderness that tears came into her eyes. "Don't despise me, Edgar," she whispered, "I can't rise to your height, I am still what my parents made me, and what I suppose it was my nature to be. If I have been worldly in my schemes for Gyneth it is only right no doubt that I should be punished by the failure of them, and you shall see I will resign myself in time even to accepting a son-in-law who despises me."

"He wouldn't dare to do so, you must be mistaken!" said Colonel Deshon, much pained and excited by such a supposition.

"I am not, I have known it all along, it was so even when you first married me, and he was only a school-boy; never mind,—" as she saw her husband still incredulous, "we will suppose that I am mistaken, and for Gyneth's sake I must be friends with him now, whatever I have been before. I presume he still wishes granny to live with him? Gyneth will like that, and it will now seem quite a natural arrangement. Shall I go down and do the civil to him at once?"

"Not if it pains you, Fanny, I would not have given my consent if I had thought—"

"Nonsense," she said, rising, "one must put a good face on it, if Gyneth is happy and if you are pleased, Edgar, what more can I want? and you

will see that I shall be on very good terms with my new son ; no one ever succeeded in quarrelling with me yet, and I don't suppose he is inclined to try. Now do I look fascinating enough ?" and she smiled, kissed him, and went down stairs looking as gay and gracious as possible. Colonel Deshon followed her, feeling a good deal distressed, and disposed to scrutinize sharply Lewis's behaviour towards her. Nothing, however, could he detect amiss in this ; Lewis was perfectly courteous and attentive as usual, and delight and gratitude had made him more than usually cordial, there was not the slightest symptom of the feeling Mrs. Deshon ascribed to him, and her husband concluded then and ever after that she had been mistaken, and was only sorry that so painful a fancy had occurred to her. And yet she had spoken truly enough, as regarded the past at least, for Lewis *had* despised her and was only slowly learning the charity which lifts our scorn away from those who think or act weakly and meanly, and fixes it on the weak and mean thoughts and deeds in the abstract, leaving us free to feel Christian tenderness and pity for the persons themselves, even while we regret and dislike their faults. He had never seen her with her husband's eyes, and it was only lately that he had learned to look for the good points in her character instead of contemptuously dwelling on the bad ones, but now he was determined to accord her all the honour he could, for Gyneth's sake, and though he knew she disliked him and that he must sometimes expect to be provoked by her, was quite determined never to quarrel with her, or forget the respect which was due to her as the mother of his future bride. And so, though it was not likely that there would ever be much love between them, there was enough good humour, right feeling, and tacit forbearance

on both sides, more especially on his, to make the new relation between them quite endurable if not agreeable, and to show that Lewis would never be one of those unhappy men whose constant feud with their mothers-in-law has so often been the occasion of literary satire and domestic uncomfortableness.

While Colonel Deshon had been upstairs with his wife, Mr. Grantham had been talking with the children, who had poured in on him as soon as the dining-room door was opened, and as their first greeting to him was "What have you been doing, Cousin Lewis? you look so funny sitting there smiling to yourself," he found himself obliged to give some explanation of his unconscious smile and preferred the true one to any other, saying in an odd tone of assumed demureness, "I have been asking papa to let sister Gyneth marry me."

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed Fanny, in open-mouthed astonishment, while the more collected Edgar inquired gravely, "Is papa going to let her? and does sister like it?"

"I believe I may say yes to both questions," replied Mr. Grantham, with arch gravity.

"And is it a secret?"

"No, or do you think I should have told you? it is no secret, and we are going to be married in the autumn, I hope."

"Oh! I am glad," said Edgar, "I think Bertie will like that."

"Hulloa!" was all that Fanny could ejaculate.

"You mustn't say that, Fan," said Edgar, turning round on her in his quiet superior way. "Papa says it isn't ladylike; if you're glad, you must say you are glad."

"Don't be priggish, little gentleman!" interposed Lewis, pulling the boy up to him affectionately; "you must excuse Fan to-night, for I fancy

she is in Perkyn's condition. Don't you know what that was? I'll tell you then," and very drolly he repeated—

"Had Perkyn beeene a learned wight
And knowne a bit of Greek, a
Case more than likelie 'tis he might
Have cride slowde 'Eureka!'

"But since of Latine and of Greeke
Hee noughe at alle dyd knowe,
As sone as joie wold let hym speake,
He onlie sayd 'Hullowe!'"

The children laughed, and Fanny said, "Yes; that's what I always say, when I'm pleased, and I *am* pleased that you're going to marry Gyneth, cousin Lewis; but I do know some Latin though, for Gyneth herself taught me some, and so did Bertie."

"Then so far you have the advantage of Perkyn, and we shall expect your choice of language to be proportionably select. You will have to support the character of Miss Deshon soon, Fan; I hope you're prepared for it."

"Oh, I say! you're not going to take Gyneth away, are you?" exclaimed Fanny ruefully; "we can't do without her a bit."

"You must learn to take her place; yes, don't shake your head, it will be your rightful business, little madam."

"I've a great mind to say it shan't be!" said Fan with a smile, "I always used to declare I never would go to parties, and wear furbelows, and do the things that Jeannie did. I thought it was weakminded; but somehow, cousin Lewis, I don't think so now exactly, I think that those things are indifferent in themselves, and that it is the motive they are done with which makes them bad or good. And if you ask me how I learned that;

why, I have learnt it from watching Gyneth, and I've seen too how she behaves to mamma; and do you know, when I'm as old as she is, I hope I shall be just like her; ah, you laugh, because you think I can't be, but just you wait and see!"

Mr. Grantham was not much surprised to hear from Colonel Deshon afterwards that he had thoughts of sending both Fanny and Edgar to school after midsummer, and that Bertie quite approved this plan, and subsequently a very good school in the neighbourhood of London was fixed upon for Fan, that she might be able to have the treat of occasional visits from Gyneth and her grandmamma, and it was decided to place Edgar with a master who took a small number of young boys as pupils, and whose wife was a kind sensible person who would be likely to attend carefully to the little boy's health. The prospect of much learning partly reconciled Fanny to the prospect of much torment in the shape of enforced propriety and obedience; and Edgar, to whom the goddess of wisdom was a very unattractive goddess indeed, found his consolation in the fact that 'Papa and Bertie' thought it right for him to go to school, and that he was there to have the opportunity of attending daily service, and of other things which Bertie had said 'would help him to be good.'

But to return to Gyneth. Lewis brought the grandmamma down on Saturday afternoon, and as soon as he had seen her safely ensconced in her own arm chair, set off to the close to take the news of her arrival to Gyneth, whom he found hard at work on an illuminated scroll which she was doing as a present for Rose. The two girls were sitting together near an oriel window, over which a lilac tree hung its fragrant shade; Rose employed on a gorgeous strip of Berlin wool-work, which, as it

lay unrolled in her lap, formed a brilliant contrast to her sombre dress ; Gyneth intent on her painting, yet not so engrossed as not to perceive who it was that had come to interrupt them. " And of course you have come to carry Gyneth off," said Rose with a smile, as she shook hands with Mr. Grantham ; " dear Mrs. Deshon is, no doubt, longing to see her, and you mustn't let her hurry back to me sooner than she likes."

" It is very good of you to spare her," he said in his gentlest tone of kindness, and while Gyneth was putting on her bonnet, he sat talking to his little friend, for such she really was, in that cordial gentle easy way which to Rose seemed always more comfortable than that of any other person she knew. Like Basil Hall, when paying a visit of condolence to Sir Walter Scott, after the death of his wife, Lewis thought it better 'not to make any attempt at moanification,' so they talked quietly of Mr. Burnaby's health, of Mrs. Deshon's trip to London, and of Rose's worsted-work,—which she archly hinted was destined for the embellishment of a certain drawing-room, over which Gyneth's taste was to preside, and which would therefore, no doubt, be as charming as possible,—and yet all the time she felt that he sympathized as truly with her sorrow as she with his new-found happiness.

" What a little sweet child it is!" he remarked to Gyneth, after they had bidden good-bye to Rose, and were crossing the close by the flagged pathway underneath the great elm trees which Gyneth so loved, " one is glad to feel that there is no broken-heart there, only a gentle natural sorrow which time will certainly heal."

" But Lewis, surely she did love Mr. Willis very much ; and if so, I don't see how we can expect or wish that she should get over it, as people

say, at least I know"—and there she stopped and coloured.

"She had a great *affection* for him, and would have been a very good little wife to him no doubt, but I think after all, he was right, poor fellow, when he said he was too old for her, and seeing that made me doubt more than ever whether I could be right in taking a similar step to that to which I had encouraged him. Even now I am afraid that I have been selfish, Gyneth, that I may not, after all, be able to make you happy."

"Please don't say so," she answered earnestly. "I never could be so happy with any one as with granny and you."

He flashed into sudden fire. "Gyneth, I won't be taken as a mere adjunct to granny!"

It was very different from Mr. Armstrong, who would have been content to have been taken on any terms, but somehow, Gyneth liked Mr. Grantham's way the best. "You know I didn't mean it so," she said, looking up at him for a minute with her sincere eyes, then drooping them beneath the tender contrite gaze which came in answer to her words.

"I beg your pardon," he said smiling, "I really don't mean to be cross, and blue-beardish, and jealous of your love for granny and your home-people. I know you would despise me if I were; you, who are so free from all such mean feelings."

"Indeed, I am afraid, I have felt jealous sometimes," Gyneth answered humbly, and in some confusion, "didn't you mean to warn me against jealousy that day that the colours were presented? I thought so, and it made me so ashamed."

"Jealousy of whom, and on whose account? I can't remember anything about it; the one recollection that I have treasured of that day is your

saying you liked old friends the best always, however inferior they might be to the new."

"Then since you didn't mean it, it doesn't matter," said Gyneth, feeling her cheeks getting hotter and hotter, and thankful that Lewis was taking her through quiet side-streets where there was no one to observe them, and not by the High Street, which was the most direct way.

He insisted on her explaining herself, and when he was reminded of her quotation about the crocus, and his remark that it suggested a yellow one, and that yellow was the emblem of jealousy, disclaimed having meant to convey any hint thereby. "How could you suppose that I meant anything so impertinent?" he asked half-laughing; "I did not even know then that it was in my power to make you jealous, though you made me horribly so when you danced so much with Mr. Armstrong. I remember, now, when you came out on the steps just then, I was giving poor little Rose her betrothal-ring—it had been too large for her at first, and was sent back to the London maker to be made smaller, and they kept it at the shop so long that she asked me to go and see about it for her, as she did not like being without it."

"It is so sad to think how that betrothal ended; I think I feel it more now that I am so happy myself," faltered Gyneth, "and it seems to have made me feel too how insecure a thing happiness is."

"Yes, it makes one afraid to be too confident of the future," Lewis answered gravely, "we must be thankful for the present, and try to look forward with trust,—not that we shall be happy in the way we hope, that may or may not be, but that we shall be guided and upheld, and that all will be as is really best for us. Only, Gyneth, don't think that all the little Rose's life must needs be blighted by this one sorrow, even now it has not

crushed her, but rather raised and improved her, and she will be the better all her days for having been loved by so good a man, and will some time perhaps look back calmly and thankfully at her short betrothal and all she learnt through it and its grave close, without the remembrance being any check on her happiness as the wife of some one else."

"I can't bear to think that," said Gyneth with pain.

"But why not? You wouldn't wish her to be as it were widowed all her life through, by the loss of this one true tender friend, who did indeed love her very much, and whom she loved certainly, but feared a good deal more? My little philosopher, are you still trying to force people and circumstances into accordance with your own lofty ideals?"

"No; I daresay you are right. I know now how silly I used to be, and wonder you had patience to argue with me—I hope I shall never tease you with quite such folly again," replied Gyneth meekly and rather dejectedly.

"And what about reforming the world?"

"Oh, don't! I can't bear to think how conceitedly I used to talk; I have found out at last how little I know or can do, how little able I am to judge of what should be done, even."

"What! the grand crusading schemes all given up, and the Quixotic mind toned down to a dead level of crochet-work and pretty behaviour!" exclaimed Lewis, with a droll affectation of disappointment. "I *was* going to tell you that there is a famous preserve of ragged children near that London house of ours, but I suppose you won't care for such news now."

"Oh, but tell me!" she cried eagerly.

"What's the use? If you don't know anything

and can't do anything, and don't even know what should be done, how can I expect to get any work out of you? The little girl I *used* to know would have undertaken to reform all the ragged children for me at a minute's notice."

"Only in the abstract, and even then she would have blundered most ridiculously, and provoked you into giving her a famous scolding," said Gyneth, chiming in with his playful mood.

"Never mind; those blunders were dear and precious to me, that little high-minded, Quixotic lady was my peculiar fancy; you don't mean to tell me I am never to see her again?"

"I don't know; she comes of spoiling, I think," said Gyneth, looking very shy, and very pretty, at least Mr. Grantham thought so.

"Oh, that is the atmosphere she flourishes in, is it? Well then, she shall be re-animated by degrees, though we will allow her to grow a little wiser as she grows older. And when she is quite herself again, what will she do?"

"Whatever you will let her. And, Lewis, will you really let me try to be of some little use among those ragged children, or in some other way of that sort? I don't think I shall ever be fit to do good in society, as grandmamma says you do; though indeed, I won't tease you by wishing there were no such thing, as I did so foolishly a year ago, I will try to be pleasant to all your friends."

"That's right; but, my meekest of little philosophers, don't suppose that I am going to offer you up at the shrine of the much-dreaded society; if we as married people were to go to a great many parties, we must in justice give a great many in return, and that would neither suit the dear granny, who likes a quiet house, nor my purse, which is by no means so inexhaustible as Fortu-

natus's. People have been very kind in asking me out, and as I am not particularly fond of solitary evenings, I have been accustomed to go a good deal into society at the gay seasons of the year, but that I ever did any good there is quite news to me ; and certainly I have no wish to force you into a round of gaiety which I know would be distasteful to you, and which would prevent our having the means to patch up the ragged children and things of that sort."

"But, Lewis,—it is so good of you, but I am afraid it will be a sacrifice."

"A great sacrifice, indeed ! to have pleasant home-evenings with you and granny, instead of having all the breath squeezed out of me in trying to get up Lady Somebody's stairs. No, no, Gyneth, I shall be much too happy to need any pity, and we are not going to be hermits, you know, exactly. I have some real friends whom you will like as well as I do, and whom I could not give up without ingratitude, and we shall be able to mix with them in a quiet way, without being obliged to live on crusts in private, or send a polite negative when our Rector asks us for subscriptions to his charities."

"And that friend of yours, that Rector at the East of London, and his wife ; I shall know them, shan't I ?"

"Most certainly ; they are people after your own heart, and they will help to put you in the way of being useful, for you know I am alas ! much too busy a man to be able to trot about after my little wife when she goes forth on her charitable errands."

"But will you trust me to do things without you ?"

"Will I not ? Is it for nothing that I have chosen so discreet and modest a little lady, so

submissive to all clerical and proper authority? Gyneth, my darling! do you remember how Malcolm of Scotland trusted Margaret, how he revered her charity, and made her his almoner, and did not rebuke her even when he found the little hand dipping boldly into his treasury? Well, in a smaller way you shall find it the same; we will give 'according as God hath prospered us;' each year it may be more, but whether much or little it shall not be given grudgingly, shall it? we will count it as an honour to be able to minister to the wants of the poor."

"CHRIST's poor," said Gyneth, reverently, her eyes full of such joy and thankfulness as showed how well she had understood him.

"Yes, that word fills up my meaning; and, Gyneth, I think you feel, as I do, what happiness there is in being of one mind on these things. It will help us to bear with all lesser differences, and those we must expect; you will find much in me that you cannot and even ought not to sympathise with, and this would be too painful for you if you did not know that in great essential principles we are one, and that my faults—the *man's* faults, which you, my innocent visionary child, find it so hard to understand—are at least being struggled with."

"But indeed, it is *you* who will need patience, for though I think you know most of my faults already, they will be much more tiresome to you when you come to see them constantly. Oh, Lewis! I am not fit for you, I wish I were! You don't know how superior you are to me."

"And I think just the opposite, but we will not dispute the point, you will be *mine*, and you need never be afraid or ashamed to feel that I know all your faults as well as all your goodnesses better than anyone else does. You will be patient with me, I know, as it is in your good and gentle nature

to be, and I will be as patient as—I can! for alas! I am not famed for that quality. Does this very unfair agreement frighten you?"

For all answer she looked up bravely and brightly, with such happy trust in him as she well knew he would never abuse.

To describe the sweet gladness of granny's face when she opened her eyes, after a pleasant nap, and saw Lewis and Gyneth standing together near her chair, would be impossible. Her exclamation, "My dear, *dear children!*" was almost incoherent in its exceeding joy. She would not let them dwell on her misfortune in having to leave her pleasant old home in the cathedral city, but rather turned hopefully and gratefully to the thought of the new home so soon to be open to her. "Only, my dears," she added, wistfully, "have you weighed it well? Can you really like to have a useless old granny quartered on you? It is very good and dear of you both to wish it, but indeed I can't help feeling you would be happier alone together, with no troublesome old woman to make a third in the party."

"Oh," began Gyneth, but Mr. Grantham stopped her.

"Hush! when granny speaks in that way, she is not to be replied to," he said, with such saucy sweetness, that the old lady's anxious expression vanished in a smile of amusement. "She knows as well as we do that she is talking nonsense."

"But I wanted to say," interposed Gyneth, laughing, "that it is I who make the third, for granny had nearly promised to go to you before I was thought of; so it is I who am the interloper."

It was Mr. Grantham's and Mrs. Deshon's turn to say, "Oh!" now; and the latter added, "We should have to go very far back to find the time when you were not thought of, my precious child;

though Lewis and you both tried to persuade me some months ago that you were thinking of each other only as *friends*."

"It was quite true, so far as I was concerned, Grandmamma," said Gyneth, blushing.

"I dare not say the same," said Mr. Grantham, looking comical; "on the contrary, it was a most bare-faced invention on my part; or if not that, a wonderful piece of self-delusion, wherewith I attempted to impose both on you and myself, Granny."

"And how wisely you proved to me the possibility of Platonic friendships! Oh, Lewis, Lewis," laughed the old lady, shaking her head at him.

"They *are* possible; and it is quite my fault that a glorious instance of it has not been shown now. Our friendship might have gone on calm and untroubled to the end of our lives, if I could only have maintained the gentle, unconscious moderation that Gyneth did; but, you see, when I found myself feeling too much, and tried to hide it, it gave me the appearance of feeling too little, and that so interrupted the even flow of our intercourse, that it was hopeless to attempt to bring it back to its old footing. We were obliged to become either more or less than friends, and we have chosen to be more."

"You were obliged? what a sad necessity!"

"Wasn't it? But we mustn't jest any more, Granny; our grave little philosopher doesn't like it."

And, indeed, Gyneth was leaning back in her chair, looking very thoughtful and quiet, though she roused herself at his words, and said sweetly,

"Yes, I do; it is like old times for granny and you to be playful and me to be stupid, and you mustn't mind my stupidity any more now than you did then."

The stupidity of which Gyneth accused herself was never very obvious, but she certainly took her happiness more gravely than Lewis did his ; and when she went home, and was rallied a little by her mother and Mrs. Ross on the subject of her engagement, unconsciously discomfited them both by looking so modest and serene, and innocently serious, that any railly addressed to her seemed uncalled for and out of place. Mrs. Edgar Deshon congratulated herself that Lewis's professional engagements prevented his having much time to spend with his lady-love ; and, indeed, when he did come to Harbournouth for a day, which was only occasionally, he did not inflict on her any great display of love-making, nor seem by any means so eager for perpetual *tête-à-têtes*, or so oblivious of consideration for other people, as lovers are popularly supposed to be.

One Sunday, when they were all walking back from Church together, they met Mr. Armstrong, who had just returned to the garrison after six weeks' leave of absence ; and, rather to Gyneth's surprise, he stopped and shook hands, coming last to her and Mr. Grantham, and so singling them out by his manner, that Colonel Deshon hurried his wife away, lest a scene should be impending, than which nothing, he thought, could be more disagreeable to witness. He need not have been afraid ; Mr. Armstrong had only paused for the purpose of saying very quietly,

"I came from home yesterday, and Angela begged me to be sure to remember her to you, Miss Deshon, and also, if you would allow me, to add her congratulations to mine."

"Thank you ; it is very kind," said Gyneth, her colour rising, and the hand which rested on Lewis's arm trembling a little involuntarily. "Did you leave all your friends quite well?"

"All well, thank you, but Mrs. Armstrong; and Angela quite her smiling little self again."

"Oh, I am so glad!"

"Thank you. Good-bye."

He could not trust himself to look at her when he shook hands this time, but he raised his eyes again before holding out his hand to Mr. Grantham, and for one minute the two men—the accepted and rejected—looked inquiringly into each other's face. Apparently, the result of this scrutiny was satisfactory to both; there had neither been triumph on the one side, nor bitterness on the other, in that glance, and they parted cordially, feeling much inclined to be friends.

And poor Mr. Armstrong going home lonely to his quarters felt a certain generous pleasure in the thought that Gyneth had chosen wisely and would be cherished and happy; and also a certain balm to his wounded feelings in the belief that her affections had been pre-engaged all along, and that perhaps he had failed to win her, not so much from his own fault, as because she was already won. There was more comfort to him in these thoughts than in a certain tract entitled *Broken Idols*, which Mr. Parry, with rather cruel benevolence, had insisted on pressing on him; nevertheless, in his earnest ingenuous way he applied himself to the reading of it, and if not greatly impressed by the perusal, retained an innocent conviction that the meaning was 'all very good,' and that he had really deserved to be disappointed in his love, though he could not believe it had been idolatry, more especially as it had drawn him on to higher and holier desirings, not kept him back from them after the fashion so sternly denounced by the writer of the aforesaid tract. He shrank sensitively from Mr. Parry's personal exhortations on this point, nor was it any less disagreeable to him

to hear doubts lugubriously expressed as to Gyneth's 'spiritual welfare,' when united to one so manifestly 'worldly' as Mr. Grantham! but though he waxed hotly indignant over this last piece of uncharitableness, he managed in some wonderful way to respect what was really good in the Parrys in spite of it all, and neither quarrelled with them nor with anybody else, but went on good-temperedly and patiently trying to live down his disappointment, and above all, persevering in the useful charitable labours to which Gyneth's influence had first led him to apply himself; not forgetting at the same time to fulfil his military duties with such scrupulous exactness as delighted the heart of his strict colonel, and made him the pride of all the sergeants. Do you pity him? there is no need; such simple upright loyal souls may be allowed to suffer for a time, and so gain the strength which is only won through suffering, but there is a healthful capacity for joy in them which re-asserts itself sooner or later, and they do not brood over disappointments or grow sour under them, but bear them first patiently, then cheerfully, and always sweetly, and so are ready to open their hearts to new happiness instead of ungratefully lamenting over the ruins of the old. He remained fast friends with the rector—who had partly divined his secret, but never gave token of having done so,—and opened his long purse freely both to him and to the chaplain; he even ceased to dislike Augusta, though she patronized him, and only smiled when she observed with her chin in the air—even now she was not quite cured of self-assertion—"that it was odd Miss Deshon should ever have consented to marry that distant cousin when she must have known that 'Gyneth Grantham' would sound so horribly bad."

Sound and look as it may, that is what Gyneth

has to sign herself now, for one bright autumn day, she and Lewis were married. It was a bright wedding altogether, and perhaps no face among that wedding company was happier than Lambert's, certainly most radiantly did those blue eyes of his beam when in the evening his father said to him, "I think Gyneth's choice has thoroughly satisfied you as well as me, Bertie, and now the next wedding of the family will be yours, I suppose, only you mustn't be in too great a hurry, for how your mother and I are to spare you I cannot imagine. Mr. Weatherhead was telling me yesterday that he wants to have a second curate, but is afraid he shall not be able to manage it yet awhile, and I have been thinking, that unless he is otherwise provided by the time you are ordained, he might like to have you, and remuneration would not be the object to you that it is necessarily to many young clergymen. I will take care that you shall not want."

"Thank you, Father. The doubt is, whether Mr. Weatherhead would think me fit for such a charge," said Lambert with sincere humility, as of old, yet without morbid depression.

"I don't feel any doubt on that score," returned the Colonel; "and oh, you should have seen your sister's face of delight when I started this idea to her yesterday evening. She was not so wrapped up in her coming bridal, as to prevent her entering fully into the idea of 'Bertie labouring among the poor wretched people that she had longed so vainly to help.' And indeed it is impossible to live near such a town as this and not wish to see more means employed to combat its growing evils; even when the regiment marches again, as I suppose it must do in some years' time, it will be a satisfaction to me to leave you working here; if only it be not too much for your health."

"I am getting quite strong now," said Lambert; "don't you see how much fatter I am, sir?"

"Are you? let me feel your arm." And the father turned to pat and feel his son's limbs with an anxious grave tenderness which gave a certain pathos even to this most unromantic action; then they both smiled, for they were very happy indeed together now.

Colonel Deshon, and his wife, and youngest child returned with Alfred and Jeannie to their northern home, after the wedding, and spent a month there very happily, feeling at ease about all their children, since Lawrence was going on fairly well at Woolwich, and Fanny and Edgar were comfortably settled at their respective schools.

Granny established herself in her London home, while Lewis and Gyneth were taking their wedding tour, and was there to meet and greet them when they returned. Most calmly joyful was that first evening, and when after hearing a full account of their travels the grandmamma remarked, "You must be feeling very weary after so much exertion, my child;" Gyneth answered brightly, "Not in the least, I feel stronger and better than ever, dear granny;" whereat her husband looked up and asked saucily, "How about 'Lord Ronald?' have you really forgotten him?"

And somehow those great serious eyes of hers kindled into fun as she answered demurely, "Indeed you must please not to allude to him any more, Lewis; he belonged to my maiden days, and I buried him decently on the eve of my wedding; not but what he had become extinct for me some time before that, poor fellow!"

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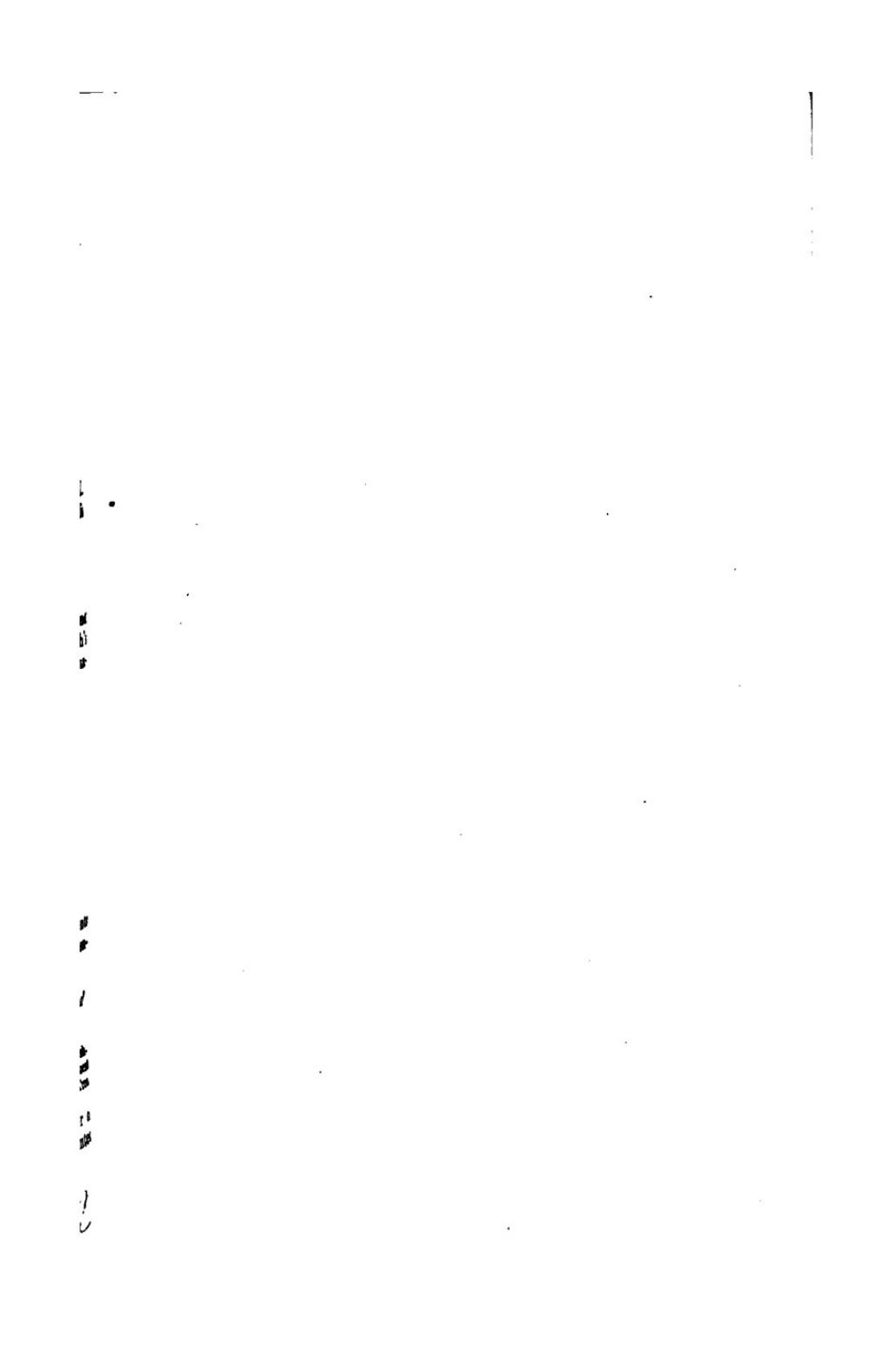
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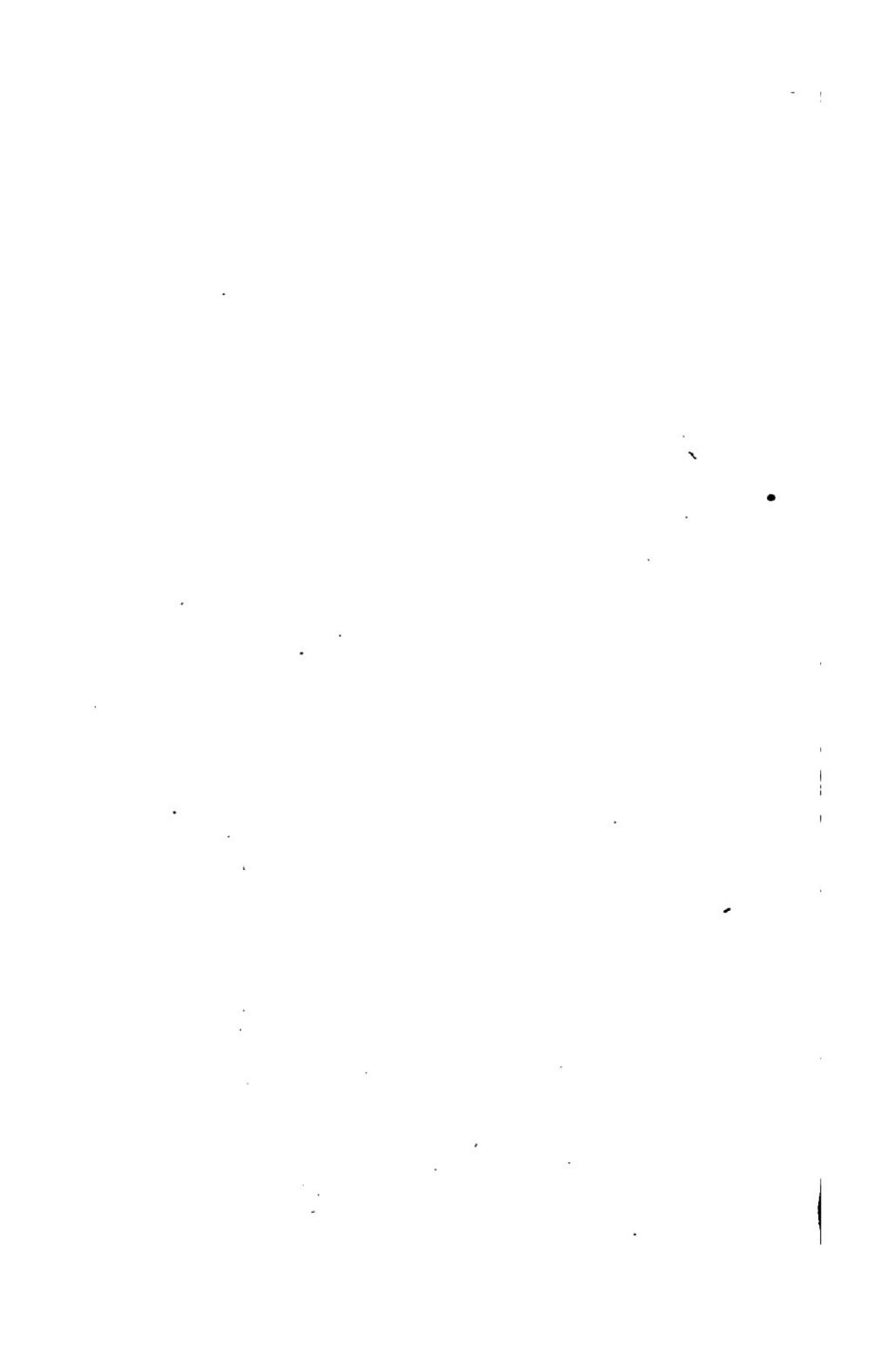
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